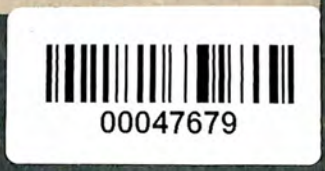
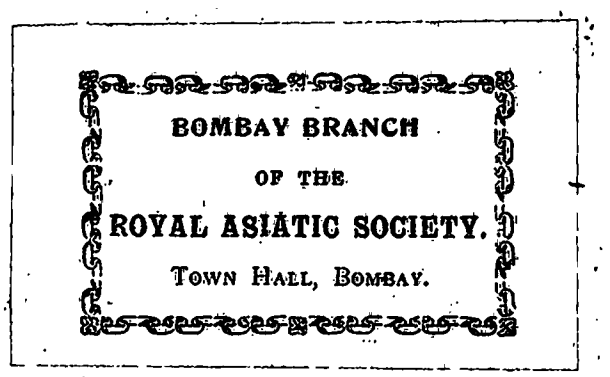
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LORENZO BENONI

OR

PASSAGES IN THE LIFE OF AN ITALIAN.

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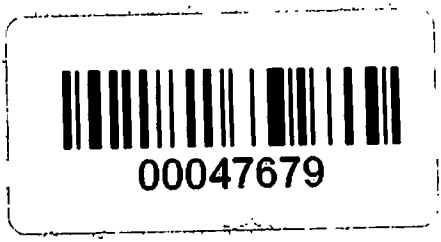


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LORENZO BENONI.

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CHAPTER I.

EARLY EDUCATION, PROSPECTS, PURSUITS, DRAWBACKS, AND TRAVELLING ADVENTURES.

EVERY day, as surely as the day came, when the clock struck eleven, my uncle the Canon invariably said Mass, at which I invariably officiated as his assistant. This ceremony had long lost the attraction of novelty, having been repeated daily for two whole years; and as, besides, my uncle's Mass was very long, it is needless to say that I went through it with a feeling of intense *ennui*. So, when, at a certain moment, after having helped the priest to the wine and water, it was my duty to replace the sacred phials behind a curtain on the left of the altar, I never failed, by way of relief, to take, under cover of that same curtain, a long pull at the phial of wine. This was only for the fun, as wine was not with me a favourite beverage.

Mass over, while my uncle laid aside his robes, and returned thanks in the vestry, I regularly went to the post-office to fetch his letters, which I as regularly placed upon his table-

napkin ; for, by the time that I got home, it was nearly twelve o'clock, our dinner hour, and the table was laid.

My uncle, my father's eldest brother, lived in a small country town, about half-way between Genoa and Nice, where he managed, but indifferently well, my mother's estates, consisting chiefly of olive plantations. I do not know the motives which induced my father, who resided in Genoa, (my mother I do not mention, because she was not allowed a deliberative voice in any matter whatever,) to send his first-born, as soon as he attained the age of seven years, to the little country town above mentioned, there to commence his education under the direction of the aforesaid uncle the canon. All I know is, that this precedent had been strictly adhered to with my second brother Cæsar, and with myself the third born, who, each in our turn, had been disposed of in the same way, that is, sent to be fashioned in manners, and initiated in the rudiments of the Latin tongue, under the shade of our maternal olive-trees ; from thence to pass to the Royal College* of Genoa, which was the second and unavoidable stage of our progress in life.

My uncle was a weak-minded, rather good than bad sort of man, about sixty, who spent one half of the year in expecting wonders from the approaching crop, and the other half in bewailing the failure of his hopes—thus for ever oscillating between the two extremes of unbounded expec-

* Let it here, once for all, be noted, that the term *College* on the Continent corresponds to that of *Public School*, not to that of *College* in England, which in Italy is called *University*.

tation and utter despair. My uncle had only one distinct idea in his brain—olives; only one interest in life—olives; only one topic of discussion, either at home or abroad—olives. Olives of every size and description—salted olives, dried olives, pickled olives—encumbered the table at dinner and supper, and no dish was served without the seasoning of olives. All my uncle's walks, in which I was regularly ordered to accompany him, had for their sole object to observe the appearance of the olives on the trees, and to watch their progress; and, at a certain period of the year, we literally trod on olives, which were strewed a foot deep on the floor of our large hall. The very air we breathed was impregnated with olive emanations.

The rare intervals in which olives were let alone were employed by my uncle in abusing France and Frenchmen. This was a sort of secondary hobby with him. What France or the French had done to the old canon I do not know, but I well remember a certain anecdote on the subject, which he would repeat over and over again, with ever-renewed mirth, and no little pride. Being once in the vicinity of the Var, where this river separates the Sardinian States from France, he had crossed the bridge, gone over to the French side, bit his thumb at France, and come back triumphant. Let France get out of it as she can!

My uncle, as I said, was good rather than bad. Unfortunately, Margherita, his old housekeeper, who led him completely by the nose, was bad rather than good. This lady eyed me in the light of an intruder in *her* house, and

treated me accordingly. She grudged me every crumb of bread I ate; she it was who used to help me at table, and she managed it so nicely, that though my plate appeared tolerably well furnished, still I could scarcely make out of its contents wherewithal to satisfy the moderate cravings of an appetite far from voracious. The regular meals once over, Margherita would lock up so strictly all the remnants, that the most accurate search throughout the house could not have brought about the discovery of eatables sufficient to treat a mouse with. Really, I felt at times so hungry, that I could almost have eaten the soles of my shoes. Margherita was not to be moved by argument or entreaty, and any appeal to my uncle made the matter worse, inasmuch as it drew upon me an indefinite number of smart boxes on the ear from the worthy lady—a summary proceeding, which seemed to afford her a good deal of gratification, and in which she indulged much oftener than necessary, considering the little, puny, sickly, quiet creature that I was, with anything, God knows, but exuberant life about me.

A tall, lanky, sallow-faced, half-starved young abbé, used to come every day after dinner to initiate me into the mysteries of the Latin language, at the rate of threepence an hour. Three-penny-Latin cannot be expected to be first-rate, which will account for my master's teaching me to decline *bonus*, *bonius*, comparative *bonior*, superlative *bonissimus*. What struck me most in this worthy gentleman was a mysterious complaint of the stomach under which he laboured, attacks of which would seize him every day, just at the very moment

when my uncle shut the house door as he went out to walk. The poor man suffered excruciating pains, which could only be alleviated by repeated applications to a certain huge green wine bottle which stood in a corner of the pantry, wine being the only article of consumption which, owing to my not liking it, was not kept under lock and key. That wine should act as a specific against stomach complaints, was singular enough; but what was still more so was, that whenever my uncle happened to stay at home during the lesson, my worthy friend would have no attack at all, but, by way of compensation, would grow so ill-tempered that he found fault with everything I did or said.

Such was the circle in which I had been revolving for two whole years, and in which, according to a decree from head-quarters, I was to revolve for twelve months longer, when one of our neighbours, a widower of seventy-four, took it into his head to marry—an event which, among other effects, had the most unexpected one of working a change in my prospects.

It was and still is a custom in these parts, that any widower entering afresh into the holy state of matrimony, should gratuitously enjoy the treat of a serenade of marrow-bones and cleavers. On the close of the wedding day, towards dusk, just as we were sitting down to supper, we were startled by a fast approaching sound of drums, fifes, and tambourines, which drew us to the window. It was indeed a grand sight! The main street, over which we looked, and where the unlucky couple lived but three doors

from us, swarmed with people. Bands of villagers, three abreast, poured in processionally, some brandishing lighted pines, stuck upon poles, some bearing mallow plants as big as trees, (a gentle hint to the bridegroom to moderate his juvenile ardour.) In the centre of the procession there was a car, drawn by four donkeys, in which sat majestically two enormous pigs, over which a mallow shrub of such gigantic dimensions that it reached above the first story of the houses, formed a verdant canopy. Then followed a dense throng of men, women, and children, provided with fifes, horns, drums, pans, tongs, shovels—everything, in short, fit to make a noise.

The car stopped exactly under the windows of the happy spouse, and, upon a signal from the leader of this multifarious orchestra, the men began to shout, the women to scream, the asses to bray, the pigs to squeak, the drums to beat, the pans to rattle; in short, a concert arose, loud enough not only to rend the ears of the living, but to rouse the dead from their slumbers.

I enjoyed the sport exceedingly, the only drawback being that I could not go and mix in the crowd, and be one of a party of urchins, whom I admired very much, and whose occupation it was to shake and drag along big iron chains.

But my uncle, who was a particular friend of the object of the serenade, was quite of another mind. He strongly disapproved of the proceedings, said it was a shame, and gave the strictest directions that on the morrow (the ceremony was to be repeated three days running) all our

windows should be hermetically closed, and that nobody should stir. The morrow came, and with it the serenade, and I was tantalized beyond expression: still I kept quiet. But on the third and *last* day the temptation became too strong, and I was not proof against it. A little before supper-time I managed to slip off unperceived, and elbow my way through the crowd to the band of children whom I had envied so much two evenings before. The end of a chain was offered me, and I fell to work *con amore*. While in the full enjoyment of this occupation, Margherita made a dart at me, seized me by the collar, and dragged me home.

My uncle sat in state, his table-napkin round his neck. That the son of my father, and the nephew of my uncle, said he, should disgrace himself so far as to join in such a scandalous proceeding, and mix with such a rabble, was more than he could stand, and deserved an exemplary punishment. I was forthwith sentenced to *carcere duro*, that is, to imprisonment in a low dark cell, once intended for a pantry, which adjoined the dining-room; and, for the time being, I was sent to bed without my supper. Next morning Margherita came to me betimes, bade me get up, and saw me to my dungeon, from which I was not released till bed-time, when she accompanied me to my bed-room, where I was to sleep. Day followed day—a week elapsed, and no change in my prospects. I was indeed sick at heart.

The cravings of hunger, which I constantly felt, owing to an insufficient allowance of soup and bread, were painful enough, but still supportable. The fits of terror that seized

upon me towards dusk, when darkness thickened in my hole, and there was nobody at home, fits of terror originating in strange mysterious sounds going on around me, were a hard trial indeed, but one which lasted only for a time. What never did cease, what passed all my powers of endurance, what made me miserable beyond conception, was a still, heavy, poignant, everlasting sense of *ennui*, that gnawed at my very heart's core, and ate me away inch by inch. To sit there the whole day alone, with no lesson, no abbé, no book, no converse with anybody, what an inexpressible torture! The very noises which frightened me so much, at times were welcome, and proved a relief. The pressure of fear at least excluded for a time that of *ennui*.

And yet I had only a word to say to be free; but I would not say it. In the partition that divided my prison from the dining-room there was a small grated window, through which I could hear every word that was spoken on the other side. And more than once I had heard the canon broadly hint, during dinner-time, that pardon should be granted, provided it were asked. But I was too highly exasperated at the treatment I received to bring myself to ask forgiveness, and my uncle's hints dropped all unheeded. My thoughts were bent another way; plans of escape to Genoa were confusedly forming in my head. One night I went even as far as the house door, and had my hand on the latch, but my heart failed me. It was so dark without!

One day—it was the eleventh of my captivity, after a long parley in whispers between Margherita and my uncle, I

heard the latter say aloud, "These are very fine anchovies, and I have a mind to send some to that poor boy; I know he likes them." My heart dilated with pleasure, not so much at the prospect of the anchovies, as at the promising change of disposition which this unhoped for boon bespoke. Presently Margherita unfastened the door of my cell, came towards me, and put before me a plate full of—fish-bones! It was a cruel joke! I said nothing, but inwardly I swore that I would be off on the morrow—shame on me if I were not. And sure enough off I went. I sat up all night dressed, and at break of day stole quietly out, and took the road to Genoa.

We were in the month of September, and very fine weather it was. I walked briskly on, frequently stopping to rest. At noon it grew very hot, and I had a good long nap in a field by the road-side. Many were the passengers who seemed to know me, and asked where I was going all alone—a question which I constantly answered by naming a place where my uncle was wont to visit often, and where, I said, he had sent me on an errand. Provisions I had none, nor money wherewith to buy any, but I ate plentifully of excellent grapes, which were no sooner asked than they were given to me, by the obliging villagers, whom I happened to see in the vineyards. Towards evening, I entered a small town, where I had been before, and where I knew that a new church was being built; so I went straight to the church, laid myself down between two large stones, said my prayers, and fell asleep.

The sun was high when I awoke and resumed my journey.

I had pains in my limbs, my feet were sore and swollen, and I began to entertain serious misgivings as to the possibility of reaching my destination on foot. However, I trudged on as well as I could, and soon came to a small white house, half concealed by trees, which I was in the very act of passing, when—what was my bewilderment at hearing a well-known voice above my head, say most distinctly, "There he is at last!" I looked up, and saw at one of the windows the grinning faces of the canon and Margherita, who, having suddenly lost all trace of me the day before, owing to their having unwittingly got a-head of me during one of my resting halts, had put up at this road-side inn, by which I must perforce pass, and whence they kept a strict watch upon the road. The rest may be easily guessed—a few hours thereafter I was once more in that odious home which I had hoped never to see again.

My uncle and Margherita ridiculed me much on my attempt at flight; they called me ever afterwards "the Runaway," or "the Deserter," and all visitors were requested to do the same. My escape was fraught with no consequences more serious than this; but the canon, who had already informed my father of my shameful behaviour in the affair of the serenade, now wrote again to tell at full length of this new escapade, giving me into the bargain such a character for a self-willed, unruly, stubborn, ungovernable boy, that my father saw the necessity of breaking down, without loss of time, this rebellious spirit, and made up his mind to send me at once to school.

A few days after the events I have just related, I brought home a letter in my father's well-known hand, upon the perusal of which my uncle chose to assume the most solemn air. He frowned several times, took some turns up and down the little dining-room, then stopping in front of me, and staring me full in the face, said, in his most impressive manner, "Deserter, your father calls you back to Genoa, you are going to enter school."

The prospect of a school life was far from pleasant to me; but the life I was actually leading was so miserable and dull, that anything like change was welcome; besides, the conviction that I must go to college was one coeval in my mind with the first glimpse of reason, and formed, as it were, a part of my being. So I took the matter more coolly than my uncle had probably expected, merely saying, that I was ready to do whatever my father wished.

Now, none of all this might have happened, had not our neighbour the widower taken it into his head to marry again!

The preparations for my journey took but little time or trouble. My whole wardrobe consisted of half a dozen shirts, as many pairs of stockings, a pair of trousers, cut out of one of my uncle's old cassocks, and the suit of fustian I had on. So a bundle was quickly made, which I could easily carry under my arm, and my departure was fixed for the second day following—a Tuesday, at seven in the morning.

My uncle recommended me to a friend of his, a gentleman who was going to Genoa on business, and who promised to

take care of me. On the morning of departure, the old priest gave me a dollar, with strict injunctions not to spend it; a small pot of preserved olives, which I was to eat with my bread; finally, his blessing, and away we went.

The motion of the carriage, a vetturino, which was very slow, and to which I was unaccustomed, at first amused me, but made me soon uneasy—very uneasy indeed. The gentleman who had the care of me, and who sat opposite, asked me several times whether I felt sick, to which, I know not why, I as often answered that I did not; but the truth was, that I did feel dreadfully sick—to such a degree, indeed, that things soon came to a crisis, which proved fatal to my friend opposite. This circumstance had the effect of altering, in no small degree, his feelings towards me; for, after giving me heartily to the deuce, he took no more notice of me than if I had still been in my uncle's dining-room. So that, when, after eight and forty hours of shaking, and being sick and hungry and miserable, we at last arrived at Genoa, and I got out of the coach, I found myself standing alone, and helpless enough, in the middle of the Piazza of the *Annunziata*, with my bundle under my arm, and a great inclination to burst into tears. I was not yet quite nine years of age.

Though very young when I left Genoa, my local recollections were vivid enough to have enabled me to find my way home, had I been put down in any central spot; but from this out of the way place, the task, I felt, was utterly hopeless. So I determined to ask my way, and seeing at a little distance a group of gentlemen, with whips in their hands,

and short black pipes in their mouths, I went up to them, and collecting all my courage, asked whether they could tell me where Mr. Benoni (my father) lived. My question seemed to cause a good deal of mirth among the company, which having subsided, one of them, a tall black-whiskered fellow, with a black silk cap, and glazed hat over it, asked me if I had any money. I said, "Yes, a dollar." "Well, my little fellow, give it to me, and I will take you to Mr. What-is-his-name." I was so anxious to get home, that I struck the bargain at once, and gave him the dollar. Upon which my new friend bade me just wait till he came back, and away he went with the rest of the company. I was very tired, and looking about me, descried, opposite to where I stood, a wooden bench, near a baker's shop, so thither I went, sat down, and waited. I waited so long that at last I began to suspect that the man and the dollar were both lost, and that I was the victim of a knavish trick, a discovery little calculated to raise my depressed spirits.

At last, an elderly buxom lady, apparently owner of the shop, asked me what I was waiting for so long. I told her my story. "Ah! poor child," said she, "you have been most shamefully imposed upon; but who ever thought of sending such a little lamb alone on a journey! Come now, try and recollect, and make me understand where your papa's house is." I mentioned San Giorgio's Church, which I knew to be close by. "That is a long way off," said she; "and when you see the church," she further inquired, "are you sure you can find your way home?" I answered

in the affirmative. The good stout lady having whistled twice, a half-naked boy came to her summons from the mysterious recesses of the shop, and she bade him accompany me to the church I had mentioned, and take care of me till I found my father's door. I thanked the kind lady as well as I could, and followed my guide. In about half an hour we reached the church, from which I had no difficulty in finding my way home. By the time I got there I was so weary and dispirited, that I scarcely dared to pull the bell. I wondered whether they would admit me, or turn me away as an impostor. Admit me, however, they did; and no words can express the relief it was to feel myself once more pressed in my mother's arms, and to burst into a passionate fit of tears on her bosom.

My mother's warm caresses and tender care soon dispelled that morbid feeling of loneliness and depression so unnatural in a child, under which I had laboured more or less for two years, and so acutely for the last eight and forty hours. It was so new to me, and so delightful to be loved, to be taken care of, to be something to somebody! But alas! this sunshine was of too short duration. Five days after my arrival, my college uniform having been made and brought home, I was warned by my father, who had been very cold and distant with me, to get ready for the next morning, it being his intention that I should enter college on that day. So next morning I got into my new breeches of blue cloth, and dress-coat of the same material, with gilt buttons bearing the words "Royal College;" put on my cocked hat,

and after a rather hasty but showery leave-taking of my mother and brothers, with a heavy heart I followed my father, who was growing impatient. An hour thereafter I had passed the fatal gate, and stood in the presence of an old priest, whose hand I was directed to kiss, and who, after patting me on the head, delivered me over to another less aged priest, who took me through several intricate passages, the last of which was very long and wide, to a room where he in his turn committed me to a third priest, who asked my name, wrote it down in a book, and then handed me a quire of paper and a pen.

The room in which I stood was furnished with five long rows of large and handsome desks, with wooden forms in front for seats. The desks were separated into distinct compartments, each of which constituted one place. One of these was assigned to me, and there I sat, stared at by eighteen boys, and staring at them in my turn.

We will turn to account this pause, to take a glance at the internal organization of the community, such as it existed in the year 1818, at which epoch I became one of its members.

There were in the Royal College at that time about a hundred pupils, varying from seven to fifteen years of age, separated into five divisions of about twenty each, classed according to age and height, so as to avoid disparity of appearance, and lastly, according to proficiency in study.

Each division formed an independent whole, possessing its own superintendent, its own school-room, its own play-

ground, its own dormitory. Only at church, and in the refectory, did the whole community meet, but even there without mingling, each division having its own separate seats, its own separate table.

The Royal College was under the direction of the Reverend Somaschi Fathers, one of the monastic orders devoted by their institution to the education of youth, and was governed according to the following hierarchy:—

A Father RETTORE—sovereign power, without control or appeal—Czar and Pope in one.

A Father VICE-RETTORE—*locum tenens* of the first in case of absence or illness.

A Father MINISTRO—the real executive power, everywhere present, and meddling with everything.

Last of all, the PREFETTI, or superintendents. A prefetto was placed over each division, and never left it night or day. At table, in the school-room, at church, in the play-ground, the inevitable prefetto was ever there, ever everywhere. During the night, from his bed, placed at the upper end of the dormitory, he commanded the whole room at a glance, and watched that silence and order should not be broken.

I must add, that the irksome and enslaving duties of prefetto were so ill remunerated, that none but a starveling of the lowest order of priesthood would have accepted the position. They were generally men without cultivation or instruction of any kind, and pretty well justified our school expression, that their tonsure was taken as a ticket of exemption from the plough or the conscription.

Of this establishment I was an inmate for five long years, of which God forbid that it should be my intention to give any detailed account. The two first may be thus summed up—much misery of mind and body, chilblains, blows, an angry ugly face requiring some impossible task, and frowning and scolding to my infinite terror, and a lovely, sweet face smiling on me every Thursday, (the day for visitors,) and, to my infinite comfort, whispering words of tenderness and of encouragement.

As easily and summarily may the next two years be disposed of, by saying that matters went on mending slowly, but steadily; that the tasks given me became by degrees less impossible, then easy enough, then very easy—that I made a friend, and grew, in course of time, into a person of some consequence in our little community.

The fifth and last year alone remains, on which I beg leave to expatiate a little more at length. The various incidents connected with this stage of my school life will afford me an opportunity of giving a general idea of the system of education then pursued in Piedmont, and may perhaps prove of some interest to those at least of my readers who have preserved in mature years that most precious gift —the faculty of occasionally becoming once more children, and feeling as such for a little while.

CHAPTER II.

INTRODUCES THE DRAMATIS PERSONÆ, AND RECORDS THE VIOLENT DEATH OF A SPARROW.

FOUR years have elapsed, and the little urchin of the preceding chapter is now grown up into a boy of thirteen—thin, pale, and rather tall of his age, who holds a perfectly honourable, and rather important, but somewhat uncomfortable position in the Second Division, of which he forms a part.

Sad was the state of things in this division, and hard the lot, and complicated the misery, of most of its members; owing partly to the misrule of a brute of a prefetto, on whom we will expend a word or two hereafter, but chiefly to a system of cruelty, spoliation, and oppression, triumphantly carried on by a small minority of four, who lorded it over, trampled upon, and treated like negroes, seventeen of their fellow-pupils, the immense majority of the set.

How, when, and by what means this abominable tyranny had been established, I cannot say. All I can say is, that I found it in full play when I first entered the Second Division, and that it worked on with a vengeance. We shall endeavour to give some idea of it, and briefly sketch the four little rascals who were for the time being our lords and masters.

Anastasius—such was the name of our chief tyrant—was a dwarfish, ugly, crooked little fellow, with a disproportionately big head, a flat nose, and wide mouth, bearing a family likeness to a tiger-cat—truly, a youthful Quilp. How this being—devoid of all superiority, physical or moral, insolent in prosperity, cowardly in danger, and whose marked characteristics were unlimited rapacity and cold sneering cruelty—ever came to exercise such immense ascendency over all around him, is still a mystery to me. But the fact was, that he did possess this inexplicable power, and to such a degree, that the very sound of his voice, most slightly elevated, would make the boldest tremble.

When, even now, after the lapse of thirty years, I think of the blasting wretchedness with which this evil genius poisoned our youthful years—when I recollect the many sleepless nights and bitter tears he cost us, my breast swells, and my hand trembles with indignation as I write. I will mention one trait, which appears to me to be characteristic of his nature.

At the time of which I write, a great event occupied the attention of the whole of Europe, I mean the heroic efforts of a handful of Greeks against Mussulman oppression. Vague accounts of this struggle had penetrated even to our school, and I need hardly add, that an universal feeling of warm sympathy was roused among us for the Greek and Christian cause. Anastasius alone of our set, and, I believe, of the whole school, wished well to the Turks, and called the Greeks rebels.

A couple of boys, remarkably tall, strong, and stupid, the two Hercules of the Division, formed his body-guard, and acted as his merciless executioners. They it was who levied his exactions—of which a goodly share came to themselves—and maintained the strictest subordination, by dint of felling with a blow of the fist, or worse still, cruelly lashing with good whip-cord, any unlucky wight who might give the slightest symptoms of resistance.

But, strongly as these two representatives of brute force supported the dominion of Anastasius, they were neither the only, nor perhaps the most essential, prop of his power. It derived its principal strength from the avowed countenance and moral sanction of one of the most influential personages of the Division, the fourth individual in this little galaxy of despots.

Handsome, rich, and generous, with a title and an historical name—two circumstances that never fail to impress to a certain degree the youthful imagination—the young Prince d'Urbino was possessed of all that is best calculated to seduce and carry along the multitude. The cringing partiality of the Superiors, and the insinuations of flatterers, who are no less plentiful at school than in the world, had ended by spoiling a naturally good disposition, and had impressed him with a belief that his title placed him far above his plebeian companions, and gave him a right to command them. The Prince, I must own, used sparingly the power which, in fact, he shared with Anastasius, and by which he only profited occasionally, for the indulgence of some little personal re-

venge, for he was very vindictive. But even then he adroitly managed to keep his colleague in the foreground, so that the odium fell chiefly on the latter. This sort of Machiavelian policy, and the habit of occasionally blaming pretty freely the doings of Anastasius in reference to his exactions, in the fruits of which the Prince was too rich and proud to share, diverted the general resentment from himself. He had, besides, when he chose, winning ways of his own, which, in spite of all, preserved for him a certain degree of popularity.

Besides these four individuals, conspicuous for their baneful influence, myself, and a dear friend of mine—the only two representatives of a latent opposition, the rest of our set was made up of youths insignificant by nature, of whom it might be said more truly than Pope says of the fair sex, "most *schoolboys* have no character at all"—grumbling from time to time when they were ill used, but letting things take their course.

I have too often spoken of exactions not to enter into some details respecting their nature, and the mode in which they were levied. The first I shall mention was of daily recurrence. A large slice of bread was all that the *foundation* allowed for our breakfast; but any one who chose to do so, was permitted to buy with his pocket-money whatever addition he pleased to the meal, an indulgence of which few failed to take the benefit. Well, as regularly as breakfast time came, lo and behold! Anastasius, followed by his two bloodhounds, coolly went his rounds, and seized, with all the gravity of a tithe-collector, out of the good things spread before his

eyes—such as butter, figs, peaches, sausages—a share more than sufficient to satisfy his own greediness and that of his worthy acolytes. This done, the three would go, and, sitting down quietly at their own desks, gorge themselves at our expense.

Such is the force of habit, that this revolting spoliation was effected without raising the least remonstrance, and came to be looked upon by many as a lawful tax rightfully levied. Some of the most mean-spirited would even voluntarily bring and offer the best of what they had.

Again: at dinner and supper, whenever a favourite dish of the tyrant's came on table, we were under the necessity of making up for him and his satellites, from off our plates, a portion ten times as large as our own. Wo to us, I well remember, whenever we had rice-pudding or strawberries, two dishes that pleased Anastasius's delicate taste!

It was also required of every boy, whose friends came to see him in the parlour, or who went home on a holiday, to declare what good thing he had brought back with him, two-thirds of which went legally to the exchequer. If this declaration was not made, or the least evasion attempted, the culprit was instantly searched, the whole of the smuggled cargo was confiscated, and a good thrashing administered to the offender.

Again: whenever there was a pic-nic or a pleasure-trip, towards which every one was to contribute, we were obliged to pay for Anastasius and his bull-dogs, and lucky enough we thought ourselves when they condescended to receive our

offering with a good grace. Besides, we had to do for Anastasius and his body-guard all their tasks, themes, versions, etc., a work that, in fact, usually devolved upon me.

These were the regularly established, and, so to speak, lawful exactions. As for those which I may term contingent or accidental, they were as numerous as the objects which might chance to excite the insatiable covetousness of Anastasius. If any one possessed a book, a penknife, a ball, dominoes, or marbles, which happened to take the tyrant's fancy, it was first hinted to the proprietor that such a present would be acceptable, and if the hint was not speedily complied with, his desk was broken open, and the thing in question disappeared.

I have already said that the opposition was represented in our microscopic community by myself and a dear friend of mine, Alfred. It is time that the reader should become further acquainted with two personages who play so important a part in our tale.

At thirteen, I was already more grave and thoughtful than most boys of that age. This disposition, scarcely natural in one so young, arose from an extreme and somewhat morbid sensitiveness, which early brought me acquainted with suffering. The slightest thing affected me deeply—a failure in my class, a harsh word from a professor, a quarrel with a school-fellow, would cause me a passionate flood of tears and violent palpitations of the heart, and deprive me of sleep and appetite. The consciousness of this morbidly sensitive disposition rendered me a peaceful being, rather indolent,

carefully avoiding noise and bustle, and loving quiet above all things.

It was for the sake of this dear quiet that I strove to repress the rush of indignant hatred which rose in my young heart at sight of the wrongs and cruelties it was so often my hard lot to witness. To engage in a struggle against Anastasius and Co., were to throw myself into a bottomless sea of trouble and care, and bid adieu to everything like tranquillity: better let things take their course and keep quiet. This I felt and told myself twenty times a-day, yet twenty times a-day something within me would revolt against such a selfish conclusion, and urge me on to action. This something was a strong spirit continually wounded by what I saw, and a somewhat romantic and adventurous turn of mind, which the reading of some books of chivalry, that had for me an unspeakable attraction, had of late not a little developed. To make myself the redresser of the wrongs of the whole Class—to raise the oppressed, to punish the tyrant —what an enticing prospect for an imagination of thirteen, full to the brim of the high deeds of Rinaldo, Ruggiero, Orlando, and the whole fraternity of knights errant! This, indeed, thought I, would be a noble part, a part worthy of me!

And so, torn between conflicting impulses, I was in a state of painful suspense, when a circumstance arose that ended all irresolution.

I have mentioned Alfred, a dear friend of mine; he was one of those gentle and tender beings who live chiefly in

their affections, and, too weak to rely upon themselves, need the stay of a friendly arm. This support Alfred had found in me. When he first entered school, two years before, his companions of the Third Division, in which I then was, had not been sparing of the tricks and annoyances, which, according to a traditional custom as old as the college itself, awaited all new comers. The poor child took this seasoning so much to heart that he cried and sobbed till he made himself seriously ill. The forlorn helplessness of the little fellow touched me with pity; so I took him under my protection, sheltered by which he had continued to live unmolested ever since. From that moment dated the passionate and exclusive attachment, amounting almost to worship, which he bore me, and which never failed me in all our after life. He was a tender and devoted friend, and I loved him with true brotherly affection.

Well then, Alfred happened to possess a tame sparrow. He had trained the little creature to perform a variety of tricks, and was passionately fond of his favourite. Anastasius one day took a whim to send and ask him for the bird. Alfred gave a flat refusal. The next day he found his desk, in which, since the alarm given by the fancy of Anastasius, he had locked up the poor bird, forced open, and the innocent little sparrow lying dead, and bearing evident marks of a violent end.

Imagine Alfred's despair! he sobbed, he raved, he tore his hair. Indignation swelled within me, and at last broke forth. I took a high tone, and publicly taxed Anastasius with the

fact. The feeling of general reprobation at this infamous act of revenge was such, that Anastasius quailed before the accusation, and denied all participation in the deed. He averred and protested his innocence, and, to all appearance, the matter ended there. But the catastrophe had cut short many perplexities in my mind. From that moment I *felt* that such a state of things was not to be endured, and vowed internally to put an end to it.

Of course, to accomplish this immediately was entirely out of the question. I had no auxiliary but Alfred, and Alfred and I, do what we would, were no match for Anastasius and Co. There were, it is true, some choice spirits of the First Division, intimate friends of mine, and personal enemies of Anastasius, who had urged me more than once to put him down, and on whom I knew I could rely; but their assistance could be but temporary, and this was not sufficient. It became indispensable, for the attainment of my object, to win over to my views, and rally round me, a certain number of my own set—an enterprise full of difficulty, but which I was sanguine of achieving, by throwing into the scale the weight of my name and of my personal influence.

For, however distressing to my modesty, the duty of a veracious historian compels me to say, that my name was an authority among my fellows. The first in all classes that I frequented, I had united, in my humble person, at the very time I allude to, the three medals of honour—for Eloquence, Poetry, and Geometry, a thing perhaps unprecedented in the college. This brought me high respect and consideration,

not only from my peers in my own division, but from the whole community. The professors were lavish of their praise, and pointed me out to the rest as a bright example; especially the Professor of Poetry, who, in the simplicity of his heart, saw in me, to use his classical expression, the future restorer of the Italian Parnassus! The superiors of the college also, proud of a pupil who did honour to the establishment, treated me with a degree of regard shewn to few.

Besides, the assistance I readily and easily gave my comrades in helping them through the difficulties of their tasks, rendered me highly popular. It was constantly, "Lorenzo, do correct this"—"Lorenzo, just look over that, there's a good fellow," by doing which, willingly and good-naturedly, I not only saved my companions from reproach and punishment, but often earned them compliments and rewards. All these things considered, I hope it may not seem presumptuous to say, that I entertained a certain degree of confidence in the influence of my example, and the authority of my name.

Alfred, of course, was the confidant of my projects, or rather the passionate admirer of the deep plans inspired by my genius. He already, in his enthusiasm, would call me *Salvator Patriæ*. To him I entrusted the delicate commission of sounding two of our companions, whom I thought worth the trial; but Alfred returned very downcast. His overtures had been received with marked and almost insulting coldness.

"Never mind, we will do without those shabby fellows,"

said I. "A little patience, Alfred, and never fear but I will find a way." I did not very well know, in truth, what the way was to be. The only thing I was quite clear about, was a firm determination to seize the first opportunity of a quarrel with Anastasius or the prince, to break publicly with either of them, and so stand forth at once as head of an opposition party. If my example rouses no one to join me, thought I, why theirs is an iron sleep indeed, from which no trumpet can awake them. I strengthened myself in this resolution, which I did not even confide to Alfred, by reading some of Alfieri's most spirit-stirring tragedies, and waited for the wished-for occasion with the calm of an old Roman.

A circumstance soon arose, calculated to goad me on still more by the stings of wounded personal pride; and by its consequences to open the way to that point which I held steadily in view.

CHAPTER III.

THE PRINCE CARRIES THE DAY, BUT I SPOIL HIS TRIUMPH.

ONE eventful day a stirring expectation electrified both masters and pupils, and the habitual calm of our community had given place to an extraordinary excitement.

His Majesty King Charles Felix, then visiting Genoa, condescended, on this very day, to receive a deputation from the college, commissioned to carry to the foot of the throne an humble expression of the loyal gratitude and devotion of the community towards their august patron. The deputation was to be composed of the Father *Rettore* and *Vice-Rettore*, accompanied by five pupils, who were to be selected by the former from the five Divisions, and presented to his Majesty. Who the five elect were to be was still a secret in the book of Fate.

"Who will it be?" such was the thrilling question that every one put to every one, and on which every conversation, in every Division, turned. Many a heart beat quick and high at that moment, if I may judge by my own.

Opinions in the second were divided between the Prince and me. We were the two likely candidates, the Prince on account of his title, and in part also because of some success

in the class of rhetoric, which, in fact, he chiefly owed to the favour of the professor, and to a certain clever knack of plagiarism; I, of course, on account of those transcendent merits, with which, dear reader, I have already acquainted you, and of my three noble decorating medals.

It was a Thursday, a half-holiday, and we were in the play-ground, a spacious oblong square, surrounded by a colonnade sufficiently wide to shelter our turbulent games on rainy days. We had formed one group in the middle, and were still debating the all-absorbing topic, every one with his ears upon the stretch to catch the first word of the longed-for announcement.

"I bet my share of sweetmeats on the Prince," cried a fawning fellow, on seeing him approach. "Who takes the bet?"

"I!" retorted Alfred eagerly, "and here is my new ball into the bargain, on Lorenzo." The reader should be informed that on this solemn occasion we had an extraordinary allowance of sweetmeats, and a glass of Malaga wine at dessert.

"Lorenzo! pooh!" exclaimed the Prince with a shrug, and all eyes turned upon me.

"And why not, please your highness?" said I, piqued to the quick. "If chance did not make me a prince by birth, something better has made me prince three times." At these words I touched the three silver stars that hung upon my breast, for each of which I was called "prince" of the class in which I had won it. The repartee, and the majestic

gesture that followed it, produced a visible impression upon the surrounding group.

At this moment, a window opening noisily arrested every one's attention. The Father *Ministro* looked forth from it upon the play-ground. "Prince," cried he in a loud voice, "dress yourself quickly, you are to go to the king!" These last words were pronounced with a solemnity almost awful.

I felt myself turn pale. The Prince triumphant placed the thumb of his right hand under his chin, and moving up and down the other four fingers, pointed towards me, walked away backwards. As this gesture, with slight modifications, belongs to all countries, I will not weaken its meaning by endeavouring to give it a determinate signification. As for me, I followed him, declining as loud as possible, *rosa rosæ*, which was considered the bitterest insult that could be offered to a student in rhetoric, as it amounted to saying, "You don't know the first declension."

I have met with many a disappointment in life, but none ever affected me so painfully as this. It was a first and bitter disenchantment. To speak candidly, I had never looked upon the Prince as a serious competitor in the affair of the presentation at court, and I made so sure of being preferred, that my failure took me quite by surprise. I felt both offended and humiliated by the precedence accorded to my rival. Not that I presumed too much on my own merits, but my impression, as well, indeed, as that of the lilliputian society in which I moved, was that rank and title could never vie with distinctions such as those which I could boast.

Birth and rank were held at college in the light of unimportant advantages; and a dunce, let him be born a marquis or a duke, was no less a dunce with us, and no less treated as such. The only aristocracy we acknowledged at school was that of talent, and of physical strength united to spirit.

To be presented to the king! I would have given my success, my medals, my very blood, to have a near view of that monarch, whom my fancy painted as so brilliant, so handsome, so good. I had cherished the prospect of this intoxicating happiness for one long month, till it had grown into a certainty. My dreams, alas! my poor dreams! I had imagined what the king, all-gracious, would say—his questions, my answers; I had even pictured to myself my attitude and looks. His Majesty was of course to notice me for my intelligence and good bearing, and then why should he not make me one of his pages? These pages, with their long flowing hair and short velvet cloaks, just as I had seen them in pictures and in the frescoes of our College Church, were to me a perfect article of faith. Once a page, I should like to know what was to prevent me from becoming influential, nay, all-powerful at court? For a page to become all-powerful, was it not a regular thing? I had heard so many tales of the kind!

And then, let the tyrants look to themselves! Anastasius and Co. shall expiate in a dungeon—but no, let them go, and never show their faces again. Banishment will be sufficient. Alfred shall have a regiment of those fine light horse, of which he is so fond on account of their red shakos and

white feathers—I had arranged everything so nicely, and now nothing—nothing but bitter disappointment! All my hopes cut off in the bud, all my future blasted!

The other boys selected were two sons of a Spanish grandee, the son of a Piedmontese general, and the heir of a wealthy planter of the isle of Cuba, all very suitable persons with respect to rank and fortune, but of whom it might truly be said, to use an English expression, that they were not likely to set the Thames on fire. Why, the Prince was quite a lion among them! No place, not one, had been reserved to real merit!

This choice may probably appear less extraordinary to my reader than it did to me at the time. The reverend fathers who conducted the Royal College, and who were, above all, the humble servants of the ruling powers, knew very well that docile subjects and not troublesome reasoners were desired at their hands. However proud, therefore, they might be of the pupils who distinguished themselves, they took good care to make no show of them at a court where talent was the worst recommendation, and a title, or a few millions the best. At that time especially, enlightened ideas were a very bugbear in high quarters. To such were owing the late insurrectionary movements of Naples and Piedmont. So it was thought high time to put an end to this sort of thing. As a beginning, the universities of Turin and Genoa had been closed, and the programme of education laid down by Francis the First, Emperor of Austria, was fast making its way into Piedmont. In answer to a plan of public instruc-

tion, laid before him at Milan by a distinguished professor, his imperial Majesty had said laconically, "All too much. If my subjects know how to read and write, it is quite enough."

To return. I concealed my deep vexation under an appearance of forced gaiety, and continued the whole day to cut up, with most biting jokes, the famous deputation of *geese*, as I called it. Late in the evening the said deputation returned. The Prince of course was glorious. The whole Division formed a circle round him, silent and open-mouthed. Then began his account of the day's wonders. It sounded like a tale in the Arabian Nights.

A magnificent coach and four had set down the deputation under the porticoes of the Royal Palace, at the foot of the marble staircase leading to the state-apartments. A master of the ceremonies, in a suit of black, and with a sword by his side, had met them there, led them up stairs, and across a vestibule thronged with a brilliant crowd of generals, chamberlains, and courtiers. It was like a waving sea of many-coloured plumes, shakos, epaulettes, and bright embroideries. They were there handed over to a chamberlain, covered with gold-lace, who ushered them through a suite of apartments, compared to which those of the Caliph of Bagdad were as nothing, into the royal antechamber. A short stoppage, and a door was opened, and the king—the king in person, resplendent like a sun, was before them! His Majesty rose, came towards them, tapped the Prince on the cheek, asked kindly after his papa and mamma, inquired how old he was, what class he was in, bade him be good, &c.

When they retired from the royal presence, away they went, full gallop, to the villa of General San Martino, father of one of the happy elect. A splendid dinner there awaited them, during which a military band was playing in the gardens. They were petted, courted, overwhelmed with good things, and nosegays—in short, every moment brought them some new pleasure. And after all this, on their way home—and this really seemed a dream—they were allowed to go into a *caffé!* Reader, do you understand? really and truly into a *caffé!* That utterly forbidden fruit to the schoolboy, and therefore most ardently longed for—they had tasted of it to their heart's content. Yes, into a *caffé* they went, examined the list of ices and wines, ordered the waiters about, drank punch, and gave themselves all sorts of manly airs.

This day, so long and sad to me, had passed like lightning for the Prince, in an uninterrupted series of triumphs and pleasures. While I was struggling to repress my tears of bitter disappointment, he was exhausting every species of enjoyment, of which even the delirious imagination of a schoolboy could dream.

Every word of this fairy tale was to me like a drop of boiling oil upon a wound, and in spite of all my efforts to conceal my feelings, envy and vexation no doubt betrayed themselves to a certain degree in my face. My countenance, even to this day, is a tell-tale, which, do what I will, I cannot control. Nature did not intend me for diplomacy. "You look uneasy, Lorenzo!" said the Prince, suddenly fixing his eyes upon me.

What a capital opportunity of casting one drop of bitterness into his cup of bliss! I could not let it slip, so I answered in the softest tone. "Not in the least, my *dear fellow*, if I felt any uneasiness it was on your account, but your narrative has completely dispelled it."

"What uneasiness, in heaven's name, could you feel about me?" asked the Prince with the accent of displeased surprise.

"Why, a very natural one," returned I. "Suppose that the king, instead of asking you about papa, mamma, and so on, had asked you something about your studies—some question in history for instance ——."

"Well, what then! I should have answered like anybody else."

"That was just the point I did not feel so sure of. Suppose that his Majesty had asked you the number of unities required by Aristotle in a tragedy, or when and by whom the Italian Sonnet was invented, you would have been sorely puzzled to answer."

The Prince winced under the sneer, the more so as he could not deny, and of course would not admit his ignorance on these subjects. "You are not my examiner, that I know of," retorted he in a would-be dignified manner, "so I shall not take the trouble to prove the contrary."

"Well, just give us a slight definition of poetry in general," urged I, "and let alone all the rest."

"Upon my word," cried the Prince, "I do not know why you give yourself such airs of superiority. Must we fall at your feet, and adore genius in your worshipful person?"

This sarcasm, followed by a profound bow of mock humility, caused a general burst of laughter. "It is not necessary," returned I coolly, "to be a genius in order to know a little more than you do."

"Oh! as to that, I am just as good as you any day," retorted the Prince, "and I hope I have given proofs of that, especially in poetry."

Here he had ventured on dangerous ground. "Why that miserable second prize," returned I, "has turned your brain, I do believe, and yet you owe it to a sonnet of Frugoni, which, moreover, you spoiled in copying."

"That's a calumny," cried the Prince, turning red as fire.

"I could prove it on the book," said I, "if I chose, but I do not. We shall see, however, if I do not find a way to cure you of your pretensions to poetry."

The bell that summoned us to rest put an end to this stormy debate, and we took our several ways to bed.

CHAPTER IV.

DEEP SCHEMES, AND A QUEER LECTURER.

My object in dropping the few hints that had so stung the Prince to the quick, was less to pick a quarrel than to cause him momentary annoyance. A quarrel, however, had ensued, and I was not sorry for it; the less so that the turn which the dispute had taken towards the end had suggested to me a capital idea.

It was quite customary in our College for one pupil to call out another, in presence of a professor, to a trial of skill in some kind of composition, either prose or verse; and the stake was generally a certain number of what were termed *points of diligence*, which were nothing else than large commas inscribed under the respective name of each pupil, and having a conventional value, representing the amount of industry and diligence displayed by him in the various daily tasks. At the end of the year, the pupils possessed of the highest number of these points were entitled to certain prizes. The guardian of the important volume, in which

they were registered upon an order of the professor, was held in high honour, and was called the *Decurion.*

These trials of skill were much encouraged by the professors, as a means of promoting useful emulation, and were termed in our scholastic language *challenges.* So I determined to challenge the Prince in poetry; and already I was so impatient for the next afternoon's lecture, that I could hardly get to sleep for thinking of it.

Alfred came to me next morning rubbing his hands. "Do you know, Lorenzo, that what you said last night about the stolen sonnet has made quite a commotion among our fellows? They have got hold of the volume of Frugoni; it is all just as you said: the Prince's sonnet is a barefaced plagiarism, merely copied, and Frederic, who ought by rights to have had the prize, is furious."

"And well he may," answered I.

"You will get him on our side, won't you," cried Alfred.

"Yes, yes, all in good time; but I have something on hand just now. Do you suppose that I have done with the Prince already?"

"I don't exactly know," answered Alfred, "but I dare say you have some great plan in your head."

"Rightly guessed;" said I, in the tone of a Napoleon on the eve of the 18th Brumaire, "this very day I challenge him."

"Capital!" cried Alfred, clapping his hands; but, on seeing me lay my fingers upon my lips to enjoin silence, he changed that expression of delight into half-a-dozen capers.

The lecture on oratory came in the morning; that on poetry in the afternoon. So, when the bell rang for the former, which I was obliged to attend, I gathered my books under my arm, much annoyed at the delay of my wishes. The reader may as well go with me into the lecture-room, where a very odd professor and a strange scene will be presented to his view.

The regular lecturer happening to be ill in bed, a supplementary professor filled his place—a thin, sallow, lanky priest of about thirty. His real name has escaped my memory, for he always went amongst us by the appellation of *Spiderlegs*, owing to the disproportionate length of his nether limbs, which gave him the appearance of a clerical shaven crown upon stilts.

Poor Spiderlegs! sublimely pre-eminent both in absurdity and endurance! Great, unknown martyr, forgive the involuntary smile that will come when I pronounce thy name, for the sake of the tear which rises at the same time; and may the deep and sincere emotion of the man in retracing thy sufferings, redeem in part the wrongs inflicted by the unreflecting child along with his companions!

The excessive tendency to familiarity which characterizes childhood, requires on the part of a teacher, to keep it from degenerating into rude disrespect, a nicety of judgment which few possess—and Spiderlegs least of all. This was the rock on which most of our superiors split, with the exception of the Father Rettore and of the Professor of Poetry. For poor Spiderlegs there was no chance. We all know how merciless

children are towards physical defects, and his were such, that he seemed formed by nature to be their laughing-stock and butt. He possessed not one quality which could command respect—no learning, no manners, no taste, no brilliant or solid qualities of any kind, to redeem in any degree the awkwardness of his appearance. On the contrary, a vulgar emphasis, absurd gestures, a rage for incorrect quotations, and a turn for floundering into subjects quite beyond his depth, combined to make of him the most grotesque caricature.

I must further mention one of his foibles, quite incomprehensible in one so ill formed. His strange figure would have been perfectly veiled by the priest's long gown, such as is commonly worn in our country; but, as if to display his deformity to its best advantage, Spiderlegs had had the weakness to adopt the short ecclesiastical coat, knee-breeches, and black silk stockings, a rather modern innovation, first introduced by some abbé anxious to show off his handsome limbs. The most serious man could not have refrained from a smile at sight of Spiderlegs, with his head complacently bent on one side, his short cloak tucked up under his arm, his elbows squared, his toes turned out, tripping forwards with a sort of skip at every step, which gave him a family likeness to a magpie wagging its tail as it hops along.

The lecture begins—Spiderlegs is in his professor's desk, which is exactly like a pulpit. How often has he stood there as in a pillory, a mark for the mocks and gibes of his turbulent class! The pupils, one after another, enter the hall,

each holding his coat-tails under his arm, and mimicking, with mock gravity, all the ridiculous peculiarities of the professor's gait. Presently, the pupils stand in a row, in the middle of the hall, to repeat their lesson. The lesson is said admirably—not a word is omitted. The professor lavishes praise and encouragement upon this extraordinary diligence, amid the titterings, to him quite incomprehensible, of the whole set; till one unlucky, near-sighted fellow, begins to hesitate and stammer. Spiderlegs frowns. "Are you not ashamed," cries he, "to fall so far short of your companions? Follow the example they have set you." Renewed hilarity. "Go nearer," says a voice. "You ought to have put on spectacles," cries another. "We'll write larger another time," breaks in a third. The direction of all eyes leads at last those of the bewildered lecturer to look over his desk, and there he sees, just beneath him, and facing the pupils, a huge paper, with the lesson of the day written in capital letters. He tears it off indignantly, and flings the pieces about him with rage.

The themes are then called for, but scarcely a dozen out of fifty can be collected. Spiderlegs exclaims against such an enormous deficit, and asks of those who have failed how this comes about. Now for the best of the joke. One, with a lamentable air, shows his cheek dreadfully swelled from toothache, which was of course, a moment before, in its natural state. Another has dislocated his wrist, and exhibits it to the professor, shockingly contracted. A third raises his fore-finger, bound round with a heap of rag—he has cut

himself to the bone. Others audaciously assert that they have given in their theme, and that it must have been mislaid, and set about hunting for it, of course only creating disorder. Poor Spiderlegs must be satisfied with what he has got, and begins to read.

The professor having made up his mind to this, his audience make up theirs, some to lean with their elbows on their desks to take a little nap as comfortably as they can, others to have a game of draughts, others to play at odds or evens. A battle with paper arrows begins between the day scholars and the boarders, seated at the opposite sides of the hall, while the rest, who have no particular occupation, set to talking, laughing, or quarrelling, with the same freedom as if no professor at all were present. The poor man pretends to see nothing, to hear nothing, till the noise positively drowns his voice. "Gentlemen," says he at this crisis, "this disturbance is quite improper, it prevents those who have the will to pay attention from doing so. I entreated yesterday, and I do entreat again to-day, those who do not care to listen to carry out their conversation *there*,"—pointing to some empty benches at the further end of the hall. "The studious and the well disposed—who are, I am sure, the great majority here, will thus at least not be disturbed by the noise."

He had no sooner finished speaking, than the whole audience rose in a body and went over to the forms pointed out for the perturbators. I will spare the reader the roars of laughter and the concert of jokes that accompany this migration. The unfortunate martyr hides his face in the

attitude of one in deep meditation. None guesses that he weeps bitter tears!

But his trials are not yet at an end. Like drunkards, whose thirst is stimulated not satisfied by drinking, so with the wild young crew the rage for inflicting torture increases by indulgence.

Profound silence suddenly takes place. Pigna, renowned for practical jokes, winks to his companions, and moves towards the professor's desk with a demure look, and a book in hand. He rouses the attention of Spiderlegs by pointing out a line, and the motion of his finger denotes that he asks the explanation of a knotty passage. The lecturer stoops over the book. Pigna watches his opportunity, and, holding his book in his left hand, with his right he suddenly flings into the professor's face a ball of paper moulded for the purpose.

The martyr's patience is at an end. A livid hue overspreads his face, his lips tremble, his eyes roll wildly in search of the culprit. At last the storm bursts on the head of a poor fellow quite unprepared. Spiderlegs, who has caught the boy smiling, rushes from his desk, catches hold of him, and begins thumping with all his might. "It wasn't I, it was Pigna," cries the victim. Now comes Pigna's turn. Spiderlegs flies at him, but meets with vigorous resistance. Help on all sides comes up for Pigna, forms are upset, books fly, confusion is at its height.

The Father Ministro and one of the Prefetti, attracted by the noise, make their appearance at this critical conjuncture,

and with some difficulty separate the combatants. The professor escapes with the loss of half his cloak, and Pigna, with another ringleader, is condemned to the table of repentance, that is, a table at the farther end of the refectory, where culprits did penance on bread and water.

CHAPTER V.

WHEREIN THE LATE SECOND PRIZE IS CURED OF HIS PRETENSIONS TO POETRY.

THREE hours later, the same hall which had been the scene of such uproar and riot in the morning, presented a totally different, and far more edifying picture. The pupils were bent in silent attention over their books, and order and propriety prevailed throughout. Only a few words were exchanged from time to time, and always in a subdued and cautious tone; not from servile fear, for there was no attempt at concealment, but evidently from respect for the occupations of the rest. It seemed almost impossible that these should be the same youths, so riotous and unruly in the morning; and the man who, by his presence alone, could operate such a metamorphosis, deserves a few words of introduction to the reader.

Signor Lanzi, our professor of Latin and Italian poetry, was a man about forty, with a considerable tendency to corpulence, which, however, a tall, well-proportioned figure carried off very well. He wore gold-rimmed spectacles, had a rather high-coloured complexion, and a countenance expressive of serene benevolence. Gentle and intelligent was his smile, and his voice sweet and melodious; but the influence

he exercised upon his numerous audience depended chiefly upon that natural refinement of manners which wins affection while it imposes involuntary respect. There is nothing that so surely commands reverence from young people as treating them with a certain degree of regard, which makes it a point of honour on their part to strive to merit the good opinion indicated.

But, perhaps, the circumstance which had the greatest share in the authority and popularity of our lecturer on poetry, was that of Signor Lanzi's not being a priest. Had he been a priest or a monk, two words synonymous among us with tyrant and fool, he would infallibly have met with a systematic opposition, and an amount of ill-will, which he would no doubt in course of time have overcome, though not without a struggle. As he wore boots and a round hat, instead of a clerical three-cornered one, and black silk stockings, he found no unfavourable prepossession against him, and we soon felt that we might yield ourselves to his guidance without degradation. Such at least was our college reasoning, and I give it for what it is worth. Signor Lanzi possessed besides intrinsic merits more than sufficient to captivate our young minds.

His erudition in Greek and Latin literature was really prodigious, and he was very well versed in Archaeology. There was hardly an author, Greek or Roman—even the most obscure, that he had not analyzed, dissected, passed through the crucible of his brain; hardly a scholium or a commentary that he had not himself commented upon. It

was a real pleasure to hear Signor Lanzi earnestly dissert, for hours, on the *Catonis animum atrocem* of Horace, or on the substitution of an *r* for a *v* in the word *Diva.*

You would have supposed, from the solemnity of his tone, that the fate of the whole world rested upon the question. He was exclusive in his admiration of the classics, and he would positively work himself up to the point of weeping over *Fons Blandusiæ, splendidior vitro,* while the beauties of Shakspere and Schiller left him quite unmoved. Indeed he hated innovators as much as he could hate anything, and would, I believe, willingly have seen them consigned to an *auto-da-fé.* Such was the man who had undertaken to make poets of us.

To return to my subject. It will be remembered how impatiently I had waited for the lecture on poetry, to *challenge* the Prince. I had previously examined the register of the *points of diligence,* and found that I had about 900, while the Prince had scarcely a hundred. Half an hour or so after the opening of the lecture, seizing a favourable moment, I rose, and addressing the professor, "With your permission," said I, "I have a *challenge* to propose."

"Ever full of ardour, Mr. Lorenzo," observed Signor Lanzi, smiling and taking off his spectacles; "that is just like you. And whom do you intend to challenge?"

"The late second prize, the Prince," said I.

The name I uttered chased away the smile, and brought in its place an expression of some embarrassment, which may be easily accounted for. The Prince had been most

particularly recommended to Signor Lanzi by the family of the youth, who were rich and powerful, and at whose table the learned professor was a frequent and welcome guest. The good easy man had his little weaknesses, and liked to keep well with such friends. It was, therefore, with the evident intention of slightly intimidating me, and sparing his protégé humiliation, that he resumed, after a pause, in a half-caressing, half-warning tone, "Have a care, Mr. Lorenzo; you throw the gauntlet to a powerful antagonist. I advise you to consider of it."

"*Est Deus in nobis, agitante calescimus illo*," replied I. This classical quotation restored the smile to Signor Lanzi's lips, and carried the point for me. "If the Prince has no objection," said the kindly man.

"The Prince," interrupted I hastily, "*can* have no objection; no longer ago than yesterday evening he said to all who chose to hear that he was not afraid of me."

"And I repeat it," cried my antagonist, provoked to the utmost by the irony of my tone.

"So much the better," said I. "You accept, then, the *challenge* I offer you, in any metre, and on any subject. I stake my 943 points of diligence against your 109, a slight advantage, which I can easily give you."

The professor rebuked me gently for this little bravado, observing that modesty was the best complement of real merit. He assigned as our subject *The Death of Philoctetes*, and allowed us two days for our composition.

If it was in my nature to enter upon no enterprise without

long and mature consideration, it was in my nature also, when once set upon an undertaking, to carry it through with unremitting ardour and perseverance. So, an hour after the dialogue I have just quoted, I was already seated at my desk in the school-room, with a huge sheet of paper before me, looking up to the ceiling for inspiration, twisting my hair through my fingers, biting the end of my quill; in short, in all the fever of composition. And after the lapse of a few minutes—the ardent wish to humble my antagonist standing me instead of a muse—the verses began to flow rapidly; and towards the close of the second day I had before me an enormous poetical rhapsody, corrected, polished, and ready to be fairly copied out.

That I was very well satisfied with my performance I must own; and well I might be, considering the feat I had achieved, in diluting and amplifying into four hundred lines what might perfectly well have been compressed into an hundred.

However absorbed in my work during these two days, I had not failed to mark certain mysterious on-goings around the Prince. Books and notes were constantly passing to and fro among his coterie. I smiled at these manœuvres, which proved only his embarrassment. But this calm state of mind soon changed to one of great anxiety. I had just copied, in my best round hand, the title, "*The Death of Philoctetes*," when I received a note, secretly passed from hand to hand till it reached me. It came from one of my best friends of the First Division. He urged me to go out to him immediately, as he had something important to tell me, which he

dared not trust to paper. I instantly pretended to be seized with bleeding at the nose, and got leave to go out. I found my friend waiting. "Well, what is the matter?" inquired I. "The matter is," said my friend, "that I am sure the Prince does not play fair. This morning I surprised one of our fellows, Collarcta, copying out of a volume, of which however I could not see the title, a *Death of Philoctetes* in blank verse, and I will lay any wager that by this time Barilli of your Division, who has been prowling about near our hall the whole morning, has managed to convey the copy to the Prince."

The blood froze in my veins at this announcement. It was a fact, which I now recollected, that Barilli, who had long since positively assumed the part of valet to the Prince, had been absent from our school-room almost all the morning; and that, when he returned, he had gone straight to the Prince, and held a moment's conversation with him. The Prince, I remarked, looked singularly satisfied at the time.

"Well," said I to my friend, "there is no time to be lost. The first thing is to find out whose the volume is, and the next to get it at any cost, if only for twenty-four hours."

"Very easy," returned he, "to know whose the volume is; indeed, I am pretty sure it is Pernetti's; but to get hold of it is quite another question."

"I tell you I must have it. Beg, borrow, or steal, I *must* and *will* have it. Why, my honour is at stake. Promise or threaten what you will. All that Alfred and I possess, take all, dispose of all, but get me the volume." King Richard's

voice crying, "My kingdom for a horse!" did not thrill with more emotion than did mine. My friend caught the passion which animated my words and looks, and vowed he would do everything in the world to satisfy me. He set about the business in the right way apparently, for at the end of two long hours of torturing anxiety, the blessed book was in my hands. I was ready to jump and dance for joy.

The Prince, in the meantime, was rubbing his hands in evident delight. "Repeat us some of your verses," said he to me sneeringly, as we came back from a walk.

"I do not remember them by heart," answered I, "you will hear them soon enough."

"Suppose," continued the Prince, "we were to add some little thing to the stake."

"I never cheat," returned I, "and to bet when one is sure of winning is cheating."

"Indeed, what exquisite delicacy of feeling!" cried he, bursting into a horse laugh.

His insolence was to me a proof that he had really copied. Well, thought I, swell at your ease, poor frog of the fable; to-morrow you are sure to burst!

At length the decisive hour arrived. The repeating of the lessons and the collecting of the written exercises having been gone through, Signor Lanzi took into his hands the two momentous manuscripts. Mine was tied with blue ribbon, the Prince's with red. A half-suppressed "Oh!" of excitement and satisfaction ran through the whole class.

"We will begin by reading the composition of the Prince,"

observed the professor; "being the *challenged*, this is his right." The Prince rose, and with a tone of perfect assurance said, "I have done the whole, Sir, in blank verse; I thought it best suited to the dignity of the subject."

"Very well," answered Signor Lanzi; and he began to read aloud, while I, with my eyes fixed on the book concealed by my desk, read silently every word that the professor uttered. The Prince had not given himself the trouble to change even one epithet; I really believe he had copied the very commas.

"Why, Mr. Lorenzo," said the lecturer, stopping at the end of the first page, and turning to me with his accustomed smile, "these are rather fine verses; so fine, indeed, that Apollo must have inspired you if you have done better."

"Truly I have no hope of it," replied I with a somewhat hypocritical tone of resignation. Signor Lanzi looked at me twice, to ascertain, I suppose, what might be the true meaning of my answer, and then went on reading. I let him continue for some time, allowing my rival to drink eagerly the praises that showered upon him, and in which I myself joined by sundry exclamations expressive of admiration. Then, taking the opportunity of a pause occasioned by a difficulty met with in making out a word, I suddenly rose and said, "If you please, Sir, I can spare you the trouble of making out the manuscript."

"What do you mean?" inquired Signor Lanzi with some wonder.

"I mean that the verses you are taking the trouble of

reading in manuscript are all very clearly printed here," and holding up to view the accusing volume, I began to read aloud the continuation of the Prince's composition. The poor boy almost fainted.

" Let me see the book," exclaimed the professor frowning; and having for a moment compared the copy with the original, he reddened with indignation, and turning to the Prince, " This is indeed an unworthy trick," cried he, flinging down with contempt the stolen verses; " it is a dishonourable cheat towards your competitor, Sir, and a downright insult to your professor." The Prince, trembling and overwhelmed, endeavoured, with tears in his eyes, to stammer out some excuse. " Be silent!" thundered Signor Lanzi imperiously, " the case admits of no apology; you can only aggravate your offence."

There ensued a pause of a few minutes, during which the professor recovered his serenity. " Now," said he, " let us see Mr. Lorenzo's production. With him we fear no cheating; all he does is sterling;" and thereupon he began to read.

All I can say is, that my poetic medley excited so much enthusiasm in the reader, and the audience, that more than one passage was received with loud applause. A dozen of philosophers (so we called the students in the class of philosophy) whose lecture finished half an hour before the others, rushed into our hall, to which the noise had attracted them, and requested the favour of being allowed to remain, which Signor Lanzi graciously permitted. Nothing was wanting to my triumph, had not the sight of the Prince, so completely overwhelmed, mixed with the joy I felt a strong emotion of

regret, and almost of remorse. He leaned his head against his desk, and strove in vain to stifle the sobs which the convulsive heavings of his chest made manifest.

The reading being ended, the professor complimented me in the most flattering manner; he declared me the victor, and ordered the *Decurion* to transfer to my account the *points of Diligence* from that of my competitor. At these words the Prince could bear it no longer, he rose sobbing, and went out. Much moved, I entreated Signor Lanzi, with tears in my eyes, to revoke this part of the sentence. "Far from wishing," said I, "for any of the Prince's *points of diligence*, I would willingly give all my own, not to have caused him so much pain." The professor was touched, and yielded to my request, saying kindly, "You obtain a double triumph to-day, for your heart is as sound as your head."

I will just add here, to return no more to the subject, that this day's victory remained a memorable event in the annals of the college, that in some circles of the town it was proposed to have my *Death of Philoctetes* printed, and that my friend Alfred was within a hair's breadth of going mad with joy.

CHAPTER VI.

DESCRIBES A BOXING-MATCH, AND A RISE IN PUBLIC PROSPECTS SOON FOLLOWED BY A FALL IN MINE.

In the afternoon the Prince appeared to have quite recovered from his late shock, and was in deep confabulation with Anastasius, Barilli, and another of his partisans. I had no doubt that they were plotting against me, and I expected no less, knowing the vindictive character of my adversary.

On the very same evening, in fact, I was subjected to the following provocation. During the half hour's recreation which follows supper I was sitting on a bench in the school-room, and chatting quietly with two or three companions. The Prince began to walk up and down in front of me, his arms crossed over his chest, positively shrugging his shoulders, and casting looks of defiance at me each time he passed.

When this dumb show had been repeated three or four times, I lost patience. "What do you want with me now?" cried I. "I suppose you wish for another chance. All quite fair. You may have better luck in Latin verse or prose."

"What do I care for your verse or your prose?" returned the Prince contemptuously. "Do I need that to live by? but who is the strongest? I should like to know that," added he, with the air of a bully.

We all know how highly schoolboys rate physical strength, and its concomitant *spirit*, as they call it. Superiority in this respect would have counterbalanced any degree of intellectual pre-eminence. We both felt conscious of this.

"Down with your hand," exclaimed I, thrusting away with the back of my right hand his closed fist, which he held up to my face. "I do not know which may be the strongest, but I know that I have ten times your spirit."

"Pooh!" cried my antagonist; "why, you are frightened at this very moment."

"I suppose you want to fight," returned I, "if the truth were known."

"To be sure I do," said he.

"Ready," cried I; "I am your man."

Boxing-matches were not rare at school, and had their forms, just like duels in the world. Each instantly chose his two seconds, who were to settle the hour, the place, and the mode of combat, which was to take place next day. My seconds were, Alfred, of course, and Frederic; the Prince's, Anastasius and Barilli.

The following morning, in opposite corners of the play-ground, stood two groups of three each, the Prince on one side, and I on the other, with our respective seconds; at the particular request of whom the rest of the Division were dispersed about as usual, to avoid attracting the attention of the Prefetto.

Poor Alfred was very busy tying a handkerchief round my waist to keep in my breath, and giving me all sorts of advice.

"Look, Lorenzo," repeated he over and over again, "just give him a good thump here at the bottom of the chest, and you will floor him in a minute."

"Ready!" cried one of the opposite party, and all six joined in a group.

The conditions of combat usual in such cases were now clearly laid down by the respective seconds. First, quite contrary to the mode of boxing established in England, which makes a black eye and a bloody nose the first trophy of valour, we were forbidden to strike blows directed to the head or face. Secondly, we were equally forbidden to trip each other up. Any other mode either of boxing, or wrestling to throw each other down, was allowed. Whichever infringed these regulations should be declared beaten. The combat was to last till one gave in, or till the advantage appeared so decisively on one side that the seconds should interfere to stop it.

We both accepted the conditions, allowed ourselves to be respectively searched to see that we had no concealed arms, stripped off our coats, and were placed at five paces' distance from each other. At the first signal given, by Anastasius and Alfred clapping their hands simultaneously, we closed, and the whole Division rushed to form a ring.

For some minutes the fight went on briskly enough, without any perceptible advantage on either side, when all at once the Prince thrust his leg between mine, and tripped me up completely, so that I fell at full length, dragging him after me in my fall.

"Foul play, foul play!" screamed out Alfred and Frederic, "the Prince has lost, part them!"

"No such thing, let them alone!" roared Anastasius and his fellow-second.

I was so thoroughly in the spirit of the fight, that, although in my heart enraged at this open breach of faith, I claimed nothing, I thought of nothing but of overcoming my adversary. We rolled over each other several times, till at length, seizing a favourable chance, I rose to one knee, pinned the Prince, with his forehead to the ground, with my left hand, while with the right I set to belabouring his shoulders, calling to him all the time to surrender.

At this critical moment arose a general cry of, "The Prefetto, the Prefetto!" and a shower of cuts from a good switch, applied by a vigorous arm, fell equally on the Prince and myself. This was an irresistible argument, so we both rose of our own accord, and thus ended our fight.

Now came recriminations. Alfred and Frederic in a towering passion, declared that I had conquered twice, the first time because of the Prince having tripped me up in defiance of the established conditions, the second because of the decisive advantage I had over my antagonist when the Prefetto interfered. Anastasius and Barilli as eagerly contended that what had happened was not imputable to the Prince, being a mere accident independent of his will, and that the combat being interrupted, no decision could be made at all. The Prince, who cut rather a sorry figure, his hair and face being covered with dust, swore by all the gods that his foot had

slipped sorely against his will. To put an end to the contestation, which was going on with useless and increasing bitterness, and not to aggravate the Prince's confusion, which was extreme, I apparently admitted his explanation, and a resolution was moved by Anastasius, and agreed to by all parties, to the effect that, *forasmuch as the fight had been interrupted, the victory could be awarded to neither, but that both combatants had given proof of strength and spirit.* This piece of diplomacy in no degree altered the general conviction that I had had the upper hand. To complete the matter, the Prince and I had the satisfaction of dining and supping on bread and water at the table of repentance.

It now remains for us to estimate the effect of the events we have just related, and for this purpose we shall take up matters a week after the day of the boxing-match.

To begin with the most striking and unexpected result: strange to say, the Prince, from the day of his second defeat, became quite an altered being. Good-humoured and obliging to every one, to me he was henceforth most attentive. In all games he betted on my side, or called me in as umpire, and without fail it was to me he had recourse for help in every difficulty in his theme or exercise. I was very well disposed to give him credit for sincerity in all this, and yet I could not but remember his vindictive disposition, and occasionally a suspicion of some trick or trap would cross me. I received his advances, therefore, with perfect politeness, but with a coldness that evidently pained him.

As to the rest of the Division, the bold position I had

taken, and my two successive victories, had just the influence on their minds which I had anticipated. The spirit of the oppressed was in some degree roused, and there was altogether a notable change for the better. The ordinary exactions went on as usual, but there were no more voluntary offerings, no more smiles, no more sneaking bows. All was silent sullen resignation, and when Anastasius was out of hearing, murmurs "not loud but deep" ran round the hall, and the eyes of the malcontents turned all on me.

It is unnecessary to add that Alfred and I were indefatigable in blowing these embers into a flame. Frederic, the boy who had been one of my seconds, had committed himself too far at the time of my boxing-match with the Prince not to go full length with us. It was even through his means that we were able to gain over to our projects another of our comrades, the strongest in the set, after the two satellites of the tyrant. This was a precious acquisition, but cost very dear. First, Alfred had to give him a splendid penknife with ten blades, of which my friend was very fond, but which he sacrificed without hesitation to the great cause. And for my part, I had to pledge my word of honour to write the theme of the new conspirator for the next distribution of prizes, and so ensure his getting one. The poor fellow was doubly anxious for this, as his grandmother had promised him a gold watch the first time he should obtain any honour.

There were then four of us, and very determined we were; the general disposition of the set was favourable, my friends of the First urged me on, and offered their co-operation;

each day, nay, each hour, multiplied the chances of Anastasius or his friends becoming aware that there was mischief in the wind—in short, I felt that now or never was the time, and I appointed the day for action.

The plan formed was this. It was agreed with our friends of the First, that the next evening, when the whole school should be coming out of the refectory after supper, they should manage to slacken the pace of their Division, while Alfred and I would, on the contrary, hasten ours, so that both Divisions should come at the same moment upon the broad and dark landing-place at the head of the passage, into which the respective school-rooms opened. Our friends of the First there leaving their ranks should mingle with ours, crying, "Down with Anastasius, down with the tyrant!" a cry which Alfred and I should answer; they were, moreover, to tax Anastasius with his extortions, which were nothing better than shabby robbery, and cry shame upon our Division for allowing themselves to be so trampled upon. Suppose our auxiliaries, to enforce the argument, thought it proper at the same time to hustle or collar Anastasius a little, so much the better; but here their part, and the assistance they could give, must necessarily end, for the Prefetti would inevitably interfere, and drive away the rioters of the First Division into their school-room. The rest was for us to do, it was our business to strike while the iron was hot.

The day had come, and we were within a few hours of the intended execution of our plan. It was four o'clock in the afternoon (eight was the hour fixed on for the breaking out

of our plot) when the door of the school-room creaked upon its hinges. "Master Lorenzo, the Father Rettore desires to speak with you," and the door closed again. These few words, which the Father Ministro let slowly fall, as it were, from his lips, threw me into a state of great perturbation.

Had our project been discovered?—was I to have a lecture for my battle with the Prince? It was not likely, considering how old the affair was. To confess the truth, my conscience told of so many peccadilloes, that I was bewildered among the various conjectures it suggested, and I went in fear and trembling towards the august tribunal.

The Father Rettore was a little old man of about seventy years of age. His carroty wig, set awry, his high-boned rosy cheeks, a large vein, which marked a thick blue line upon his red nose always crammed with snuff, tended to render his appearance rather ridiculous than imposing. And yet, notwithstanding this somewhat grotesque exterior, never was monarch in all his mightiness more revered by his subjects than was the Father Rettore by the turbulent youth confided to his care; and this was not owing solely to the perfectly unlimited extent of his power.

Other circumstances concurred to make him an object of profound respect, such as an illustrious name and exquisitely polished manners, for which he was indebted to a highly aristocratical, nay, princely education, and a reputation for immense learning, and for an austerity of life worthy of the early ages of the Church. Wonderful tales of the penances and macerations he was said to impose upon himself circulated

in the College, and were calculated to strike our young minds, open as they were to receive strong impressions from all that rose above ordinary life—and to inspire us with deep veneration for a head which we looked upon as already encircled with a halo of saintly glory.

As just as it was possible to be in his situation, kind and humane, although frequently severe upon system, full to the brim of a conscientious sense of duty, this austere man combined in himself, in the highest degree, the virtues and the defects of a fervent Catholic priest. Unbounded was his devotion to the young flock entrusted to him, for whose eternal weal he considered himself individually responsible to God; but this sense of responsibility caused him to carry intolerance to a pitch of cruelty worthy of a Torquemada, in all cases in which he thought—with or without reason—that he saw the slightest offence to religion. And such is the power of any faith deep and sincere, even when carried to excess, that in spite of its effects being often productive of serious evil to us, we looked with admiration on the bent priest, who at such times, drawing himself up, as if by miracle, to his full height, would stand majestic and inexorable, like Moses, when, coming down from the mountain, he found the Israelites worshipping the golden calf.

Besides, the Father Rettore, in order the better to maintain the manifold influence he possessed, did not disdain to have recourse to certain tactics, which proved his long and deep experience of children. A certain degree of mystery surrounded all his actions, especially the punishments he in-

flicted. It was not uncommon, for instance, that the summons to the presence of the Father Rettore should be followed by the disappearance of the individual thus summoned. What had become of him? Nothing transpired, and it was only on his being restored to his companions that it became known that he had been, perhaps, in prison. This was the system of Venice applied to a college.

Like those of the oracles of old, so the awards of this dreaded monk came from an invisible source; for the Father Rettore lived far from the eyes of the profane, and in a mysterious sphere, from which, however, his influence penetrated everywhere, and at every moment. His very rare appearance in public became an event the more imposing from its always occurring unexpectedly. He spoke little, seldom smiled, was very sparing of praise, which he ever tempered with some slight reproof, and there was generally something of studied severity, I might say of harshness, in his manner; but this rugged exterior concealed exquisite sensibility, which we had more than once discovered. At the bed-side of the sick his mask would fall off, and the natural man appear: there he let forth all the treasures of his gentle kindness. What care, what tender anxiety, what soft solicitude! He would become a child again himself, to bring a smile upon the lips of a sick child. With what affection he would make himself his nurse, watch and comfort him, and humour his little wishes or his whims!

It was affecting also to see the good old man on a sacrament day, his countenance radiant, and shedding tears of

tenderness, as he prayed for his beloved children, whom he believed to be in a state of grace. These bursts of sensibility, which gave an insight into the depths of his soul, did not escape our sharp-sighted observation, and mingled with our awe of the Father Rettore, the more tender sentiment of almost filial love.

Such was the man in whose presence I was about to appear. My hand trembled as I knocked twice at the door, in accordance with the usual regulation. "Come in!" was answered from within in a dry tone, and I entered.

CHAPTER VII.

THANKS TO A FELLOW-PRISONER, I AM ROUSED FROM UTTER DESPAIR TO THE MOST SANGUINE ANTICIPATIONS.

THE arm-chair in which the Father Rettore was seated in a state of perfect immobility, was placed against the side of the wall in which the door opened, so that in entering the eye caught only his profile. I hardly dared to cast a look that way as I cautiously advanced to place myself on his right hand, where I remained standing. He did not turn his head, or make the slightest gesture indicative of his having become aware of my presence; but, on my endeavouring to take his hand, which leaned upon his knee, in order to kiss it according to custom, he drew it back sharply.

There ensued a minute of awful silence, during which I could distinctly hear the rapid beating of my heart and the buzzing sound of the flies' wings, rustling among the papers that lay in confused heaps on the table. Presently the Father Rettore seemed to awake, and slowly opened a drawer, whence he drew forth a printed volume, which he placed before me, pointing with his forefinger to the title, so as to fix my attention upon it. I read—"*Index Librorum prohibitorum a Summo Pontifice*," etc.—"*Catalogue of the Books prohibited by the Sovereign Pontiff*," etc. Having left me

more than time to read and weigh these words, he withdrew the book, turned over the leaves, as if seeking some particular passage, and then presented it to me again. This time the inexorable finger pointed to the words, "*Milton's Paradise Lost.*" I felt annihilated. I wished myself a thousand feet under ground to hide my confusion.

Alas! a few days before, when at home for a holiday, I had taken from my father's library the first volume of the Paradise Lost, translated into Italian, which I had carefully hidden in my desk, whence the Prefetto, no doubt, or some of the prying superiors, had ferretted it out; and in fact, on raising my eyes, I saw the accusing volume on the table. I was found guilty of the greatest crime which could be committed at college!

At length the storm which the awful silence portended burst upon my head. "So, Sir! could I have expected this from *you?* Is this the return you make for the care and kindness shown you by your superiors? Is it to rush headlong into impiety that you use the talents which it has pleased God to lavish upon you? To Him you are accountable for your time, and you spend it in reading impious books, in spreading the poison of heresy among your young companions —*you*, who owe them, on the contrary, an edifying example. Why, Biscozza is an angel compared to you." (Biscozza was notoriously the most wicked boy in the school.) "What are *his* childish tricks compared to impiety? Do you know, that by the mere fact of having read that book you are in a state of mortal sin? Do you know that, were it to please God

to strike you dead at this moment, (may His divine mercy give you time to repent!) you would go to eternal perdition? Can you think of this without shuddering, Sir, or have you already reached that height of modern philosophy which denies the infallibility of the Vicar of Christ, or even Christ himself?"

There was in the tone in which these last words were uttered such a thrill of bitterness and yet of sadness, that I felt completely overcome. The Father Rettore's hands were agitated by convulsive motions to such a degree, that I ventured to raise my eyes towards him, from the fear that he was going to faint away. I saw a big tear drop upon his cheek, then stop, then roll farther, and fall upon his gown.

Evidently exhausted by this passionate discourse, which he had pronounced with the greatest volubility and ever-increasing animation, the Father leant his elbow upon the table, and his head upon his hand. At the end of a few minutes, he changed his posture, and began talking to himself with vehement gestures. An indifferent spectator might perhaps have smiled at seeing the right hand (still pertinaciously holding between finger and thumb a pinch of snuff, which the good Rettore never abandoned on any occasion) suspended in air, and awkwardly cutting little circles in its progress downwards: but, as may well be supposed, I was very far from feeling any inclination to laugh. The monologue, of which I could merely catch here and there a word, such as "duty," "weakness," "eternal

'salvation," "his mother," ended by a violent pull at the bell. A lay brother entered. "Send me the porter," said the Father, "and tell him to bring the keys of the prisons." (The porter held also the office of jailor.) This conclusion came as a relief to me. To such a degree did I suffer in the presence of my terrible judge, justly incensed against me, that to escape from it I could almost have thrown myself into the fire. A heavy step and a clanking of keys announced the porter. The Father Rettore made him a sign, and dismissed me with a dry "Go!" I kissed his hand, which this time he did not withdraw, and followed my silent jailor.

The prison in which I was confined was really miserable. Imagine a small cell, low and damp, receiving no light but from the narrow slit of a grated, unglazed window, placed so high that it was necessary to clamber up to it in order to catch a glimpse of sky about the size of a pocket-handkerchief. All other sight was shut out by a great wall, that rose at a very short distance exactly opposite, at least six feet above the slit window. The only furniture this comfortless room contained was one straw chair, a small deal table, and four planks, laid upon iron tressels, and supporting a wretched straw mattress. Such was my new abode. I had no communication whatever with the external world, neither books paper nor light, bread and water for my only food, and abundance of mice rioting on the floor, and mounting sometimes even on the bed. Add to this a biting north wind rushing all night through the rotten old shutters that

most ineffectually closed before the window, and you will have a complete inventory of the comforts that awaited the poor prisoner.

I threw myself on my miserable straw bed in a state of great depression. The scene which I had just had with the Father Rettore had made too strong an impression upon me, not to lead to serious and alarming reflections. So, then, I was really very guilty, so much so that I deserved eternal flames! My reason revolted against this too terrible award. What was there so very wicked in that book? Nothing, it appeared to me. Yet, the Pope had judged it to be very dangerous, since he had forbidden the reading of it. Was I really come to the pitch of denying the infallibility of the Pope?—was it because I had become an impious heretic, a hardened sinner, that I could not work myself up to repentance? Make what efforts I would, however, I could not bring myself to it. And then, when I must tell all this to the confessor!—I shall certainly die of shame!—No doubt, he will refuse me absolution—and then, what will my superiors think of me?—what will my companions say when they see that I do not take the sacrament along with them?

Insensibly, however, my thoughts took another direction, and went back to the all-absorbing interests I had left behind me. What will become of our plans? Will my associates risk the great stroke without me? Certainly not. Alfred, of course, by this time has warned our friends of the First not to stir. But, suppose he should be pre-

vented?—suppose the Prefetto, as is often the case, should allow nobody to go out, on any plea whatever? What if they were to try, and fail!

The contention of spirit arising from these various imaginings soon rendered bodily inaction insupportable. I jumped off the mattress, and by means of my table, on which I placed my chair, I scrambled up to the slit of a window, but, wearied with contemplating the sky, I soon left my observatory, and came down again. Innumerable inscriptions covered the walls of my dungeon, and, hoping to find some relief in the occupation, I set myself to make them out. There were some of all sorts—serious thoughts, comic thoughts—some rebellious, some resigned, some cowardly, some heroic; and, in spite of the absent mind with which I read, there were a few that struck me. "*Quicquid impune facere, id est Patrem Somaschum esse.*" (To do everything with impunity, this is to be a Father Somasco.) This parody of a famous sentence of Tacitus, written in huge letters, was signed with blood "Sforza." Great was my surprise at seeing such a name take the responsibility of so bold a sentiment. Sforza, one of the First Division, was looked upon as a perfect nonentity, and was not even initiated into our revolutionary projects. In another place, there was written at full length, the touching history of a young captive, who had endured fifteen long days of confinement rather than reveal the name of an accomplice. This unfortunate martyr to honour had marked his sufferings day by day on the walls of his prison, his only tablets, in a simple and pathetic lament, in rhymed stanzas,

ending each by this burthen, "Better in prison die than live to be a spy." Further on, an almost imperceptible "Death to Anastasius!" made me smile bitterly. Hidden in a corner, and written in microscopic letters, it sufficiently attested the pusillanimity of the writer.

Here ended my review of these inscriptions. Although the days were long, for it was in April, and there remained a good hour of light elsewhere, dusk was already gathering so fast in my hole that I could see to read no longer; so that my own irritating thoughts again took full possession of me. As the shades thickened around me, and the appointed hour approached, my anxiety became more intense, and my steps more and more rapid. I believe I must have been feverish.

All at once a bell rang—it was the call to the refectory. In half an hour the blow will be struck—and I shall not be there. I bit my hands with rage, and beat the mattress, the walls, and my own burning forehead with my clenched fist; but presently it was far worse. Hark—the bell rings again—a convulsive shivering came over me, my whole soul seemed gathered in my ears, as I laid them close against the door—Now is the moment—first came an indistinct sound, then more clear—cries, trampling—a pause—the cries, the trampling re-commence—it is certain, they are fighting—what agony! "Help, Lorenzo, help!" This cry, which I fancied I distinctly heard, completely overset my already troubled brain. I became literally frantic; I flew to the bars of the window, and shook them with redoubled strength;

I tore my hands in vainly trying to force the lock of the door. Every attempt only proved my utter helplessness, and made me roar like a wild beast. Had I possessed the means I should certainly have set fire to the prison. Had I possessed a weapon I do not know what mischief I might not have done. At last, weary and bruised, I threw myself upon my mattress, and there lay, heaving, panting, exhausted to such a degree that I hoped I was dying. My eyes closed, as I thought, never again to open.

A voice calling me by my name awoke me with a start, for the torpor which I hailed as the harbinger of death had resolved itself into a good sound sleep, which came to repair my sinking strength and spirits. I was quite surprised to find myself not only alive, but with my head cool, and my thoughts clear; I felt rather frightened, however, at the profound silence and darkness that surrounded me. I already began to attribute to a dream the voice I imagined I had heard, when I was again distinctly called. It was the voice of the Prince. In one instant I was off the mattress, and fumbling in the dark, had set my chair and table so as to scramble up to the window like a squirrel. "Where the deuce are you?" "Why, here in prison, close to your cell." I have forgotten to say that on the left of the room in which I was shut up, and on the same line, extended a set of cells destined for the same purpose. "Anything new in the Division?" asked I eagerly. "Nothing at all," answered the Prince. Relieved at once by these few words from a whole world of anxiety, I fell to asking him questions, and making the best

of the chance that had given me a fellow-sufferer, in order to while away time.

"Did you know that I was in prison, that you called me?"

"To be sure I did. I suspected as much when I did not see you return, and in order to be quite certain I questioned the porter, who ended by owning the truth."

"And why have they put you in also? and so late too?"

"Because, as we were going to the dormitory, I told the Prefetto that he was an ass."

"Upon my word, if you have no worse lie on your conscience, I give you full absolution; but how came you to say so?"

"Oh! for nothing at all. The Prefetto reported me to the Vice-Rettore, who desired me to beg pardon, which I did, after the following fashion, 'Mister Prefetto, I beg your pardon for having said you were only an ass, for certainly you are both an ass and a clown.'"

"That was a comical idea, upon my word. One night, however, is soon passed, and to-morrow you will be free, for this is not a place for princes."

The slight irony of my tone seemed to annoy my companion very sensibly, and he answered in a voice of much emotion—

"Always Prince! Is it my fault that I was born one? I wish I were a common laboturer, and then perhaps you would not have such a spite against me."

"I protest I have no spite against you; you lay too much stress upon a mere joke;" returned I, moved in my turn by

the ingenuousness of his words, and still more by the tone in which they were uttered.

"Oh! yes, you do hate me; I may have deserved it formerly; I was wrong, I know I was: but now, when I do everything I can think of to make amends, it is really cruel of you to treat me with such disdain, and such suspicion."

"I do assure you, you attribute to me feelings which I do not at all possess. If formerly——"

"I am not speaking of formerly," interrupted the Prince, "I am speaking of now, of this very moment, when I am talking to you. Can you say that you do not distrust me? Do you think I am blind? do you think I do not know what is going on? that this was the very day fixed on for action? but I am distrusted, I am treated like a coward or a spy."

Wonder kept me silent. How could he be so well informed?

"And yet," continued the Prince, bursting into tears, "I am neither the one nor the other. Nobody hates Anastasius more than I do; and nobody, perhaps, if only a little confidence were placed in me, could give better help in putting him down."

I considered a minute, and then, "Look you," said I, in a grave and solemn tone, "I do not consider you a coward, or a spy; indeed, I don't. If I have not shown you more confidence it has not been from want of will, but that others were concerned. Tell me only that I may, and I will believe you upon your word."

"If you may!" answered the Prince; "why, do you know from what motive I got myself put into prison?"

"Got yourself put in?"

"Yes, got myself put in prison deliberately, on purpose, without any provocation. Do you know why? that I might have an opportunity of opening my heart to you, of trying to deserve your confidence, of proving to you that I am not unworthy of it."

Astonishment, emotion, admiration, kept me dumb once more.

"And mark," continued my interlocutor, "if to-morrow they come to let me out, without doing the same for you, if I don't refuse to stir out of my cell, even if I were to die in prison."

School conspirators are of a kindly spirit, and at that happy age of frankness and enthusiasm no one guards against traps and pit-falls, which would argue a baseness and perversity of nature, the possible existence of which is not even suspected. It is only later, alas! and in real life, that one learns to distrust unknown fellow-prisoners, whose business it may be to inspire with confidence, by a supposed similarity of suffering and danger, and then to take advantage of moments of outpouring of the heart, to send one to the scaffold. Civilisation at school was not so far advanced, and secret instigators and pumpers, pretended fellow-sufferers, prison-confidants, and such like wonderful inventions of the modern art of governing, were things and names equally unknown with us. So that, far from suspecting a latent snare in these decided overtures

of the Prince, and overcome, moreover, by a trait of heroism which raised him immensely in my eyes, I felt my old grudge melt away under the warmth of his accents, and my heart open to the most entire confidence.

Perfect intimacy sprang up between us from that moment, and after some preliminary soothing explanations, I laid before the Prince the whole of our plans, our resources, and views, while he in his turn detailed to me the means upon which he could depend, and which he put at my disposal. These means were his own personal co-operation and that of Barilli and another of his friends, of whom he was as sure as of himself. This brought our number to seven. A physical force so respectable, supported by the influence of our names thrown into the scale, was more than sufficient to crush the tyrant. Consequently we agreed to do without our allies in the First, and to achieve our own revolution unassisted—a truly *national* revolution. We determined also to come to action, as soon as we should be restored to our Division, only leaving time for the Prince to inform his friends of the matter.

Just as we were on the point of separating, after several hours' conversation, a feeling of distrust came into my mind. "One word more," said I, laying a meaning stress on each syllable, "to bring down the tyrant is not all, we must crush tyranny itself, and render its return impossible, and this can only be done by constituting LIBERTY." I think I had found the phrase in Tacitus.

"With all my heart," returned the Prince, yawning, "only

I confess I do not know how to set about it. Manage things for the best yourself; I have as unlimited confidence in your wisdom as in your intentions, and I will back you in everything, blindfold, and always."

"What do you think of a republican government?" insisted I. "Sparta, Athens, and Rome, owed to that their brightest days of glory and prosperity."

"I think that whatever you do will be well done, and that is all I think about it; but really I feel very cold—good night!"

"Good night."

Flattered, on the one hand, by the absolute confidence of the Prince, but deploring, on the other, his utter want of general principle, I went and lay down on my bed. After all, thought I, Rome was not built in a day; and thereupon I fell asleep.

CHAPTER VIII.

EXPLOSION—A LESSON TO TYRANTS.

NEXT morning about ten o'clock an order came from high quarters for the Prince's liberation and my own. My return to the Division was a real triumph. As I have already said, I was very popular among my companions, on account of my readiness to help them whenever there was a difficult task to be done, and therefore, if only in this respect, my absence became a sort of general calamity; but on this occasion the discontented—and they were numerous, who felt instinctively that I was their leader, were of course glad to see me once more among them. On every side came congratulations, and warm shaking of hands, which I was not slow to return.

As for Alfred and Frederic, they received me with tears in their eyes, and marks of veneration which I was at a loss to understand. Having attributed my disappearance to the discovery of our plans, they had looked upon me as nothing less than a martyr to liberty. I undeceived them in a few words, and told them to hold themselves in readiness at a moment's warning; but for further explanations, I put them off till the play-hour after dinner.

At that hour Alfred, the Prince, and I, met in council, and the following morning was unanimously fixed upon for action. It was also agreed that each of the conspirators should receive gratis at breakfast (we three clubbed all our savings towards this patriotic expense) some of the choicest delicacies the town could afford. The greediness of Anastasius would infallibly be excited on seeing so many good things, a portion of which he would, of course, adjudge to himself. Here the opposition was to begin. He among the conspirators to whom Anastasius should first address himself, was to protest, and resist to the utmost. All were to engage on oath to do so. This procedure could bring no real danger to him on whom the lot might fall, since the Prince, Alfred, and I, would be near, and would at once interpose. Above all things indispensable, were calmness and avoidance of untimely demonstrations. The conspirators were to await a signal from me to show themselves, and have recourse to force if necessary, at the cry of "*Down with the tyrant!*" Having thus concerted all our measures, we separated. Alfred and the Prince went to carry these instructions to the rest of our friends, while I remained alone, thinking of the morrow, and pacing slowly up and down the play-ground in the mood of Cæsar when about to cast the die for the world at Pharsalia.

Motives of deep policy had determined me to fix the hour of breakfast for striking the grand blow. In the first place, I had calculated that at that moment, when the property of all was in danger, we should find a powerful auxiliary in the

selfishness of each individual threatened in his goods. Sad necessity this, common to all conspirators, even to those at school, of having to seek their resting point far more in the material interests of the multitude, than in the noble consciousness of right! Secondly, as the Prefetti were in the habit at that hour of quitting their respective halls, without entirely losing sight of them, and of walking up and down the wide lobby into which the doors opened, I had settled in my mind to take advantage of the momentary absence of our Prefetto, to carry through our affair without the fear of an untimely interruption on his part.

The critical moment drew near. It was a dark, rainy morning, and the aspect of our Division assorted very well with that of the heavens. The severe and careworn faces of the conspirators, bespeaking a sleepless night and deep anxiety, wore an expression almost awful; and either from the influence of the atmosphere, or from the dismal glare of the lamps, mixed with the doubtful light of day, even the countenances of those who were not in the secret looked more grave and thoughtful than usual. The sound of the rain pelting against the windows, alone broke the silence which, contrary to custom, was religiously observed.

At last the decisive hour struck. I cast one glance around upon my faithful band, answered by a responding look from each, which said that he was ready, and that I might rely upon him.

In less than a minute the great basket which contained our breakfast was emptied, and each, carrying away his

portion, returned to his desk. The Prefetto went out of the hall. Anastasius, rubbing his hands with delight, began his rounds. His covetous gaze was rivetted upon the wonders spread out before his eyes, such as apples, pears, oranges, dates, almonds and raisins, Bologna sausage, tablets of chocolate, butter, etc. etc., and he seemed only to hesitate from the difficulty of making a decisive choice. The two satellites were, as usual, at his heels. "How now!" cried he with a horse-laugh, "has one of you gained a prize in the lottery, that you feast in this way? Well," continued he, stopping before the desk of one of our band, "here are two oranges, such as I have hardly tasted in all my life. Now, they do tempt me; but as I am a good fellow, we will share them between us, like good friends."

"I am very sorry," answered the owner of the oranges, true to his word, "but you shall not taste these." "Are you mad?" returned Anastasius, "or do you want a little lesson?" And so saying, he dexterously got hold of one of the disputed oranges, which the other boy endeavoured in vain to cover with his hands and elbows. The despoiled one protested loudly; it was time to interpose. I went straight up to Anastasius, followed by Alfred and the Prince, who managed adroitly to put themselves between him and his satellites, so as to isolate him. My heart beat thick.

"What do you mean by this violence?" said I; "by what right do you rob Francis of his property?" The tyrant turned pale. "Is that any business of yours?" returned he, after some hesitation. "Certainly it is," replied I, "and I

insist upon knowing by what right you take his orange from him?" My persistance and my look of determination evidently intimidated Anastasius, who stood speechless. "You take it by the right of force, eh?" continued I in a tone of *quousque tandem abutere, Catilina,* "but we will see if you are the strongest, Sir. Do you think that we will endure for ever your abominable violence? Is such your intention, gentlemen?" (addressing the public.) Some energetic "No, Noes," were heard here and there. "As for me," cried I, raising my right hand, "I declare I will bear it no longer, and I say, Down with the tyrant!"

"Down with the tyrant!" roared six voices, with the precision of a volley of musketry.

"Down with the tyrant!" echoed almost unanimously the rest of the Division, electrified by the example of the six.

"Have done with this uproar!" grumbled the voice of the Prefetto, appearing suddenly at the door; but deceived by the apparent calm of the Division, he turned away instantly.

The tyrant, who had seemed overwhelmed by this outbreak among his subjects, gathered some courage during the short appearance of the Prefetto. "What is the meaning of this comedy?" asked he, with trembling lips and blanched cheek.

"Take care," returned I, "that the comedy does not become a tragedy. Give Francis back his orange, I say."

"I will give back nothing."

"By Jove! we will find a way to force you, though," answered I, exasperated, and suiting the action to the words, I threw myself upon Anastasius, closely followed by Alfred

and the Prince. This was the signal for a frightful scuffle. The whole Division, like one man, fell upon Anastasius, each seeking to strike the hardest blow. "Help, Peter! help, John!" cried the tyrant in stifled accents. Peter and John, who perceived which way the wind set, like true acolytes of tyranny, deserted to the enemy. To the repeated calls of Anastasius they answered with a laugh, "Here we are! here we are!" and coming up with their bunch of cords, began to lay them thick upon the back of their former master.

This desertion completely annihilated Anastasius. The resistance which he had till then kept up against our attacks, gave way to the most complete submission. On his knees, with clasped hands, with floods of tears, he entreated mercy; he supplicated that his life might be spared, and it was not without immense difficulty that, uniting our efforts, Alfred, the Prince, and I, succeeded in putting an end to a scene equally disgusting, on the one hand, by the low cowardice of the vanquished, lately so insolent, and on the other by the merciless fury of those slaves of an hour ago, sixteen against one. It must be allowed however, that the slaves had suffered long and cruelly.

All this had happened in a shorter time than it has taken to relate, so that when the Prefetto, passing again before the door, cast a glance into our hall, the Division had resumed its habitual appearance of order. Anastasius was sitting in his place, leaning his head against his desk, and sobbing; but his depression and his tears, far from awaking any compassion in the breasts of the revolted, only gave rise to the

most bitter jests and gibes. "I do believe he is crying," says one. "Oh!" returns another, "it is all make-believe, unless indeed, he is crying for the orange." "I'll tell you what it is," says a third, "the orange was not ripe, and has set his teeth on edge." "Will your majesty please to accept this humble offering?" says a fourth, with mock humility, kneeling on one knee, and then suddenly swallowing, amidst the applause of the spectators, the slice of Bologna sausage he had just held under the nose of Anastasius.

From other quarters came threats, insults, and bitter recriminations—"Cry away, monster, who made so many cry. What pity had you for me, when you had me flogged so cruelly?"—"Where is the horse-laugh with which you answered the cries of your victims?"—"Oh, my good friend," exclaims another, "we have a little account to settle. Where is the pen-knife you stole from me?"—"Where is my new ball?"—"Where is my bottle of *rosolio?*"—"Where is," etc. And thus a dozen voices succeeded each other with the rapidity of the blows of a hammer on the anvil. "I say," shouted the first, "what is to hinder us from taking back our property?" "Quite just!" repeated the rest; and in one moment the whole crowd of claimants rushed towards the desk of Anastasius, who had just time to escape. True to my office of Moderator, I strove to prevent this riotous outbreak, and failing in this, to give it at least the character and the form of a regular vindication of property. My exhortations and my prayers were swept away by the overboiling passions of the tumultuous throng, thirsting for ven-

geance. On the instant, the threatened desk was broken open, and not only were the claimed articles taken out, but all that belonged to Anastasius—books, pens, papers, etc.—were torn to pieces, and trampled upon. What could not be torn was flung out of the window.

I mourned in silence over these acts of vandalism, and I learned for the first time, to my great mortification, that it is easier to excite popular tempests, than to arrest them in their course when once let loose. What I felt at this moment has more than once recurred to my mind in after-life, while reading the histories of Revolutions, and has given me the key to many a seeming contradiction and change, of which the lives of public men offer such frequent examples in revolutionary times. Alas! that we should ever find the abuse close upon the exercise of a right, license treading on the heels of liberty—evil by the side of good; but such is mankind.

When the bell rang that summoned us to church, I drew a long breath, and felt relieved. Anastasius would have a moment's respite at last; but I was mistaken. A new and worse torture was about to commence. We were no sooner on the staircase than the terrible word was passed from the first to the last of the column, "Vinegar* of Anastasius." To make *vinegar* of one, in school language, meant to shut him into a compact circle of boys, who pushed him, one from

* After the juice of the grape has been pressed out to make wine, the remains of the fruit, fermented in a small quantity of water, are submitted to a much higher degree of pressure to express the moisture, of which vinegar is made. The application of the comparison is obvious.

another, like a ball; or to shove the victim against a wall, and fall upon him in a mass, at the risk of producing suffocation. This last mode was decided on. Anastasius did not articulate a word—not a single groan escaped him during this new infliction, which, thanks to the Prefetto's immediate interference, did not last an instant; but he must have suffered cruelly. His face was convulsed, his lips were white, and he tottered like a drunken man. His misdeeds were certainly great, but his expiation was truly awful. As, during the remainder of the tale of our school days, we shall have no occasion to bring Anastasius again before the reader, we shall here shortly state what became of this unfortunately famous personage.

For five successive days was he subjected to a constant repetition of the insults and tortures we have just described. All contact with him was avoided, as with one infected by the plague, except at those moments when he was to be martyrized. Those whose places were near him in the school-room, in the refectory, and even in the dormitory, left them, and when we went out to walk his only refuge was by the side of the Prefetto. Nobody would allow himself to be sullied by the proximity of the Paria. During the play hours he was exiled far from all human converse, either in one corner of the play-ground, or at his own desk in the school-room. Wo to him if he attempted to pass the line of demarcation, and to mix with his school-fellows! There was, however, between them and him one sort of communication—that between master and slave; for Anastasius was

become the helot of the Division, and every one had a right to order him about. "Anastasius, go fetch me my tambourine,"—"Anastasius, water my garden,"—"do this, do that;" and he might reckon himself lucky when it was not thought necessary to stimulate his activity by blows.

This, in our own Division. Without, whenever there was momentary contact between the different sets, Anastasius was pointed at, scoffed at, insulted, and ill treated by great and little, for even these last, emboldened by his abject state, would give him a passing cut with a cord. At the end of these five days the boy was really scarcely recognisable; you would have said, to see him so deadly pale, and so thin, that he was just recovering from a six months' illness; and yet, no one felt the least pity for him, no one among the hundred boys except Alfred and myself.

The superiors, of course, had taken his part, but in vain. Punishments inflicted upon some of the most riotous only served to irritate the rest. In short, things came to such a pass, that one day—it was the fifth after his fall—in consequence of a terrible *vinegar* from the First and Second Divisions combined, the superiors saw it necessary to pretend to send him to prison, in order to save him from the popular effervescence. It was to the infirmary he was sent instead, where he remained two days confined to his bed; after which the Father *Rettore* begged his parents to come and fetch him, and keep him at home till the excitement against him in the school should have somewhat subsided. It was not till a month afterwards that Anastasius re-appeared, but *quantum*

mutatus ab illo Hectore! Pale, trembling, his eyes bent on the ground, he advanced into the middle of the school-room, where we were all assembled, and where his father and mother, who stood on each side of him, with tears in their eyes, asked pardon for him, of each and all of us, and entreated the whole Division to shew him some indulgence, in respect of his sincere repentance.

Through such a succession of suffering and humiliation it was, that Anastasius the proud, Anastasius the tyrant, had to pass! May his example be at least a useful lesson to future school-tyrants!

CHAPTER IX.

A REPUBLICAN GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHED AND A ROMAN TRIUMPH EXHIBITED.

It will no doubt be remembered that the overthrow of tyranny was but one half of the task which I had set myself, and was in fact looked upon by me only as a means of attaining a far greater and more desirable end—the settlement of liberty on a broad and solid basis. I am not sure that I had a very clear idea of what this might mean; but these were fine sounding words, and lads of thirteen are apt to fall in love with words, and take them for things, which, as everybody knows, grown-up men never do.

Even if this idea had not been long my darling dream, the frightful anarchy into which our Division had been plunged, ever since the fall of Anastasius, would have been sufficient to awaken me to the necessity of some rule being laid down, and strictly observed. This, and this alone, in my opinion, could secure freedom, and guard our little community from the tyranny of many, or of one. For, even on this score, I confess I was not without my fears; and the immense popularity the Prince had acquired by the important part he had played in our glorious revolution, combined with what I knew of him formerly, made me a little uneasy. It is but fair to add at once that in this I was com-

pletely mistaken, and that if the Prince endangered public affairs, which he certainly did now and then, it was not through any views of personal ambition, but rather from mistaken zeal for the interests of liberty, which he was ever fancying in peril.

The very day, then, following the departure of Anastasius, having first agreed upon the plan with the Prince and Alfred, I assembled the whole Division, and laid my ideas succinctly before them; that is to say, the expediency, nay, the necessity of some fundamental law approved by all, and the establishment of a magistracy charged to see to the execution and to the due respect of that law. My overtures were very favourably received, and when I threw out as a hint the words *republic*, and *consular authority*, general and very marked assent followed. Emboldened by this first success, "let those," cried I, "who are for a republic hold up their hands." All hands were raised as by common accord, there was not one dissenting voice, and, upon a proposal from the Prince, I was charged on the spot with the drawing up of the plan of a constitution, to be presented in the shortest possible time for the acceptance of the nation.

Strange but true. Public education in Piedmont—the part of all Italy, perhaps, most despotically governed at that time—was entirely republican. The history of Greece and Rome, the only thing taught us with any care at school, was in truth, according to the light in which it was placed, little else than a constant libel upon monarchy, and a panegyric upon the democratic form of government. The decline of Athens

and of Sparta, happy and flourishing so long as they remained republics, dated from the day which gave power into a single hand. Rome dated her greatness and power from the moment she expelled the Tarquins, and the great republic which had conquered the world faded under the hands of the Cæsars, failed to defend its conquests, allowed inroads, and at last vanished. Our indignation against tyrants, and our enthusiasm even for their assassins, seemed to be purposely excited. The subjects given us for our themes in the classes were ever in this range of ideas. Sometimes we were to hurl the thunder of our Latin eloquence upon Cæsar about to pass the Rubicon; and to prove, in an oration in three parts, with exordium and peroration, that it was the act of an unnatural son to smother the republic his mother. At others, Brutus, both the elder and the younger, Mucius Scævola, Cato, etc., were to be deified in poetry. Thus, from our most tender years we were inspired with ideas and feelings quite opposed to those we ought to have brought into real life, and with a blind enthusiasm for actions and virtues, the imitation of which would be condemned and punished as a crime by the society in which we were to live. Now, was this not absurd? was it not wantonly sowing danger to be reaped in after life?

Elevated to giant height in my own estimation by the part of Lycurgus, with which my companions had entrusted me, and full of the deep responsibility of my task, I set to it in earnest, and it was not before a whole day and night of solemn meditation that I definitively settled my ideas; and

then an hour sufficed, to lay upon paper a Constitution in eighteen articles, which I confess I thought a master-piece. This master-piece is lost, alas! irretrievably lost—at least the chief part of it. The infinite pains I have taken to find a copy have proved fruitless. The loss is the more painful to me, as, in our own times so many constitutions have been strung together—sworn one day and forsworn and destroyed the next, then taken up again, to be again laid aside. Seeing all these various essays and attempts, I sometimes ask myself whether, perchance, mine was not that phœnix of a Constitution which people and governments have all been so long hunting after in vain? At any rate, the comparison between the plan of a head of thirteen, and those of old heads, and big wigs, would not lack piquancy; but this is mere idle regret. I will just note here a few of the articles of my plan, which I happen to remember, though, I am sorry to say, they are not the most striking:—

Art. 3. The national power resided in the whole Division. This power was delegated, by the majority of votes, to two consuls, charged with the administration of justice, and the maintenance of liberty.

Art. 5. The power of the consuls was to last six months. They could not both be re-elected without an interval; but one might. (I protested at the time, and I still protest, against any imputation of personal motives in this clause—I do, indeed.)

Art. 16. Corporal punishment was abolished, as unworthy of free men.

Art. 18. Crimes against the *res publica* were punished by *ostracism.* The nation alone could pronounce this, upon the proposal of the consuls. The citizen under ostracism lost all civic rights, and was cut off from all intercourse with the rest of the community.

My project was adopted by acclamation, and, on a motion of the Prince, an article was added in these words—"All titles and denominations of nobility are, and shall remain abolished." This motion, dictated by the purest patriotism, brought shouts of applause to its author. After this incident, the nomination of the consuls took place at once. I was chosen unanimously, and the ex-Prince, now simply Joseph, by fifteen votes out of nineteen. We at once named our two lictors, and our choice fell upon the two brothers, ex-satellites, as being the best qualified to cause our decrees to be respected. We then returned thanks to the assembly in a few words, and upon our proposal it was agreed that the official installation of the new authority, and the oath to be taken to the Constitution, to which some had thought of proceeding immediately, should be delayed for four days, that is, till the following Sunday. It became, we said, the dignity of the Division, to surround with all possible pomp and solemnity the inauguration of the new order of things, and the delay of four days was not too much to prepare a little national holiday, intended to celebrate an event which, transmitted from generation to generation, would be imperishable and form an era in the annals of the college.

The active bustle of our little republic from that moment can only be compared to that of a hive of bees. All heads and all hands were at work to realize a magnificent *Roman Triumph*, of which happy idea I must take the entire credit to myself. Who can estimate the enormous quantity of wood, paste, paste-board, grey, red, yellow, gold, and silver paper, consumed during these four days? The school-room was turned into a work-shop, and the play-hours were those of our hardest labour. One was making a cuirass, another a shield, a third was putting the finishing stroke to a helmet, a fourth was fashioning a sword. The musicians manufactured their instruments; the lictors prepared their fasces, and covered their axes with silver paper. Instead of following, step by step, the slow progress of these labours, let us view them at a glance in their majestic result.

The following Sunday, then, at the play-hour after church, a long roll of drums announced the departure of the procession, which put itself immediately in motion, and leaving the colonnade, under which it had just formed, came forth into the square, round which it was to march. The entrance to this square was effectually defended by the vigilant Prefetto; but the numerous windows opening upon it were crowded with spectators from the other Divisions, who received the column at its first appearance with loud hurrahs, and prolonged clapping of hands. It was headed by a band composed of a clarionet, a fife, a trombone, and a huge drum, playing warlike flourishes and military marches. When I say that all the instruments except the drum were made

of pasteboard, and that, consequently, our newly created musicians drew all their music from their own throats, you can imagine how exact, as regards time and tune, was the performance. Each wore a uniform of red paper, crossed upon the breast with large bands of gold-leaf, a yellow shako and white plume, and a sword by his side. Next came the lictors, with their fasces surmounted by shining axes. A long false beard, which fell to the breast, and an immense fur cap, which covered the head, gave them a most imposing aspect. A silver corselet, a sort of white apron hanging from the waist to just above the knees, and a broad short sword, of which the black scabbard came out in fine relief against the white ground of the apron, completed their costume. Then came, standing upright upon a sort of litter composed of rather ill-joined boards, and borne upon the shoulders of four citizens of equal height, the two consuls, whose steady equilibrium, and consequently their personal dignity, was frequently endangered by their inexperienced bearers. Our Roman costume shewed some pretension to historic correctness, and I must say we had spared neither pains nor expense to attain that object.

A wide-folding nankeen tunic, fastened round the waist by a black leather band, somewhat after the fashion of the modern blouse, fell to our calves, and over this tunic floated something that had originally been a blue serge bed-curtain, and was now, by the ingenious addition of a broad scarlet fringe sewed on its border, raised to the dignity of a toga. Our arms and legs—this was the master-stroke—were naked,

and these last surrounded by narrow bands of yellow leather, which imitated not amiss the ancient sandal. The magnificent helmet on our heads, and the broadsword which we brandished, were slightly at variance, it is true, with the rest of our peaceful apparel; but how was it possible to resist the temptation these articles offered, when we saw nothing on every side but dresses resplendent with silver and gold? As a sort of corrective, however, of these warlike attributes, we wore round our helmets a wreath of olive, and the blades of our swords were entwined with garlands of oak-leaves.

Two enormous white flags, fastened to each side of the litter, formed a sort of majestic canopy above our heads. Upon one was painted a *fascis*, with this motto in golden letters, "Union makes strength;" upon the other, two hands intertwined, with the words, "Republic, Fraternity." The six boys who followed in the rear, and closed the procession, were remarkable for the richness of their cuirasses of gold and silver, and still more so for the great variety of their head-gear, such as Spanish caps with gold bands and white plumes, cocked hats with wide gold lace, helmets, shakos, etc. Alfred especially, in a complete light-cavalry uniform, red shako and gold epaulettes, with an immense broadsword in his hand, excited on his way the general admiration.

When the *cortège* had marched round the square, and returned to the point from which it had started, there was a halt. The triumphal car of the consuls was set down, the lictors stood on each side, and the whole body ranged themselves in a semicircle round the supreme magistrates. I then

began to read the articles of the Constitution, to which the ex-Prince and I were the first to swear obedience. Successively as the name of each was called over, the citizens came forward towards us, to take the oath of obedience to the law, and of allegiance to the elect of the nation; which done, each received from us a fraternal embrace. After this ceremony, the procession moved on again in the same order as before, to the cries, a hundred times repeated, of "God save the Republic! God save our Consuls!" to which responded the cries of the numerous spectators at the windows, waving white handkerchiefs in token of joy. In the meantime the musicians struck up brilliantly Rossini's "*Tanti palpiti.*" Enthusiasm was at its climax, all eyes glistened with emotion. At last, after having once more marched round the square, the procession passed under the colonnade, and there separated in the greatest order.

In the evening there was a general illumination of the two windows belonging to the school-room of the Second Division, and a distribution of ices at the expense of the consuls. So ended a day for ever memorable among the traditions which are still preserved fresh and living in the college.

CHAPTER X.

GIVES A SKETCH OF DON SILVESTRO, AND SHEWS HOW LITTLE CAUSES CAN PRODUCE GREAT EFFECTS.

In spite of a few acts of insubordination, quite unimportant in themselves, but which used to exasperate my ardent tempered colleague, who saw conspiracies everywhere, and breathed nothing but ostracism; in spite of some occasional trifling whims of opposition, which the ex-Prince looked upon as crimes of high treason, and would have punished as such, while gentleness and persuasion more easily overcame them; in spite, I say, of these slight stumbling-blocks, things went on capitally in our Division, which, after so many agitations, was beginning to enjoy the benefit of the free institutions it had given itself now more than a month since, when an incident occurred which, although merely personal to me, and therefore of slight importance in itself, had, alas! in its final results, the most disastrous effects upon the destinies of our young establishment—so true it is that the slightest cause may sometimes produce the most serious consequence!

I have hitherto delayed introducing to the notice of the reader the Prefetto of our Division, lest my account of him should appear almost incredible. As we are presently to see

him at work, I trust that the not very flattering character which I am compelled to give him will be deemed amply justified by his own doings.

The Prefetto of our Division was an ugly, dirty, round-bellied priest, with a large red nose covered with carbuncles, which might have rivalled that of Shakspeare's Bardolph, and two little savage eyes bright with malice. Such, in two words, was Don Silvestro. (The title of *Don* is given in Italy to all the clergy.) Scarcely able to read his breviary, knowing no language but the dialect of his mountains, his profound ignorance, which he himself could not help being aware of, joined to natural and instinctive malignity, kept him in a constant state of hostility towards a set of youths whose superiority humbled him, and disposed him to see an insult in any expression, the meaning of which his thick skull could not catch. But this sort of latent ill-will transformed itself into open warfare and frightful violence, whenever he chanced to be seized with a fit of a kind of malady, which we did not know how to define, and which was nothing less than decided melancholy madness. I suspect, for my part, that these fits were, if not occasioned, at least aggravated, by excess in drinking, as there was always about him, on such occasions, a strong smell of spirits. His fixed idea in these fits was, that we were determined to have his life. Sometimes he fancied we had poisoned his wine; at others he declared there was a plot to murder him during his sleep. I remember that one day he saw a menace of death to him in a red cross which I had most innocently

painted on my desk. Another time he had one of my school-fellows sent to prison, as guilty of having sharpened a pen-knife with the intention of cutting his (the Prefetto's) throat. This unfortunate man died a few years afterwards in a mad-house, raving in his last moments of nothing but poison and daggers.

It was to such a man that the care and education of twenty young people of good family were confided. The thing appears incredible, yet such is the fact. It is not easy to imagine all we had to suffer from the humours of Don Silvestro, especially during his paroxysms—punishments inflicted at hap-hazard, and at every moment—false accounts to the superiors, which frequently caused us to be put on bread and water—besides the blows he showered on us thick as hail. The slightest observation, a second's hesitation in bending to his caprice, threw him into absolute fury; books, keys, inkstands, the first thing, in short, that came under his hand, would he hurl at our heads. One day, in the play-ground, he flung at me a wooden bowl, heavy enough, had it reached me, to have killed me on the spot. Without any exaggeration, it is with me a matter of wonder that none of us was killed or maimed.

One afternoon, when I had just finished a sonnet on the death of Hannibal, of which I had only to make a fair copy, I went up to the Prefetto's desk, to ask him for a sheet of white paper. This writing-paper, of which the Prefetto had the daily distribution, was of such bad quality, that it was more fit, in truth, to wrap up sugar-plums than to be written

upon. Meaning in perfect innocence to make a pleasant, harmless joke, "Please, Mr. Prefetto," said I, "will you be so good as to give me a sheet of that beautiful *vellum* paper?" No sooner had I pronounced these words, than the savage —God forgive him—mistaking in his stupidity the word *vellum* for *vilain*, (rascally) answered me by such a stunning slap in the face, that literally a thousand sparks flashed in my eyes. The fit of rage which seized me at this treatment no words can express; suffocation took from me at first the use of speech, which I no sooner recovered than I burst into the most violent torrent of invectives, throwing into the face of the priest appellations, the mildest of which were, *ass*, *brute*, and *ruffian!* "Go on your knees," cried the irritated Prefetto. "I won't," answered I, no less exasperated. "We'll see as to that," returned he, catching me violently round the waist; but I had just time to grasp one of the large desks which stood along the school-room, and Don Silvestro only succeeded in dragging me a few steps, and the desk along with me. Seeing he could not manage the thing in that way, he bethought himself of other means, and, in order to make me let go my hold, began to strike violently upon my hands with a key. But he had thus no better success; for, as he could not beat both hands at once, so he could only make me loose one, while I held on firmly with the other, but never with both at once.

Already my hands were bruised and bleeding, and pain drew from me smothered groans, when the Vice-Rettore entered. Don Silvestro instantly stated the case, of course

suppressing all mention of the more than brutal provocation he had given. "On your knees," roared out the Vice-Rettore, "on your knees, in the lobby."—On my knees in that lobby into which opened all the school-rooms—*I* to be thus set before the whole community—I, a prince, a consul!! No, never; death before dishonour! But alas! the combined efforts of my two executioners soon tore me away from my protecting desk, and dragged me into the middle of the passage. Between accomplishing this, however, and forcing me to bend my knees, they found a great difference. In vain did they try to do so by pulling my legs, or by pressing with their whole weight upon my shoulders, some how or other, there I was, still bolt upright. At last the Prefetto, rendered frantic by my resistance, seized me by the collar, and flung me violently towards the opposite wall, against which my face struck with full force. The shock was so tremendous that I fell senseless; when I recovered I found myself stretched on the ground, bathed in blood, which flowed abundantly from my nose. I was suffering dreadful tingling pain in my face, with a burning and intolerable sense of tension. The Prefetto and the Vice-Rettore were stooping over me, and endeavouring to raise me. The sight of them, much more than the pain I felt, restored me to my full feeling of rage. To rise, pass the lobby at one bound, leap down two staircases, and rush like a rocket into the middle of the Father Rettore's room, was all done in a second. "Send for my mother, I'll go away instantly—my mother, I *will* have my mother!" these words, broken by sobs, cries, passionate

stamping, and imprecations, were the only explanation I gave of my sudden apparition.

At sight of the blood with which I was covered, and of the wild expression of my face, which was already very much swelled, the poor old man remained for a moment stunned and speechless; then coming towards me with a hurried step he forced me with gentle violence to sit down, and, with tears in his eyes, and a trembling voice, he began to talk to me with such kindness, such tenderness, that I was moved, and presently my increasing emotion found vent in tears, which were an immense relief. This enabled me to give a short and faithful account of what had passed, to which the Father Rettore listened with the deepest interest. He then persuaded me to follow him to the infirmary, where he had me put to bed, and himself helped the assistant in washing my face, and in applying to the swellings poultices of some soothing decoction.

Disarmed by this touching and paternal care, I let him do what he would with a good grace, and listened with docility to all he chose to say to me respecting the danger of giving way to anger; but I insisted no less on seeing my mother. She was, in fact, sent for. She came next morning, and was dreadfully shocked at my bruised and swollen face. I related to her my misfortune with many tears, and expressed my firm determination to leave school. Contrary to my expectation, my mother made no objection, (not that I supposed she would make any of her own accord, bless her!) She observed only, that she must first of all know how matters stood, and

for this purpose see the Father Rettore. The result of her conversation with him, and it was a long one, proved consonant with my wishes. The following day my mother came for me in a carriage, which took us to a country house she possessed a short way out of town.

The satisfaction of having carried my point, the novelty of the scene, the balmy air, the full and entire liberty I enjoyed, all conspired to throw me for a time into a sort of intoxication of happiness. At the end of a week I should have entirely forgotten my late mischance, if a large livid spot over my right eye had not reminded me of it. Nevertheless, my entire solitude—for neither my father nor any of my brothers had appeared—began to hang heavy upon me, and I often thought with regret of poor Alfred, of our young republic, and of the prizes I might have had, and should not get. In short, by the end of another week, I was steeped in *ennui*, and completely miserable. My mother came to me in one of my moments of depression. "Well, my child, what do you say to going back to college, seeing Alfred again, and winning that host of prizes which you have but to reach out your hand in order to obtain?" I went through the form of resisting a little at first, but ended by yielding; on condition, however, that at the end of the scholastic year, which would be in little more than two months, I should be taken altogether from school. There could be no difficulty about that, for, as I afterwards learned, the thing had been settled long before at head-quarters, and my younger brother was to take my place.

On the very evening of the day on which this conversation had been held I returned to college. As I crossed the threshold of the school-room I received a most satisfactory impression. Don Silvestro was no longer there (he had been sent away), and his desk was occupied by a new face. I was intensely delighted at this. I had at least been the instrument of some good to my comrades—that was a comfort; but alas! in what a state of confusion, or rather of utter dissolution, did I find that establishment, which I had left so flourishing, so full of promise, only a fortnight before! Its ruin was owing to the excessive severity of Joseph, the ex-Prince. Vainly had Alfred, named consul in my stead, endeavoured to moderate the vehemence of his colleague. It was a sort of mania with the boy: for the slightest offence he invariably adjudged ostracism as the punishment. In short, things had come to such a pass, that the numerical majority of the company (such an absurdity seems scarcely credible)—the numerical majority, I say, lay under ostracism. The exiles then established a counter-government, named their own consuls, and deposed the former ones, who, along with their adherents, still held out. Civil war was thus, as it were, organized, and at any moment a collision might be dreaded between the two sections. All these details were given me by Alfred with tears in his eyes. "We have no hope but in you," added he; "you alone can save us."

This intelligence threw me into a state of consternation; and, even to this day, I cannot tell whether I could have found within me sufficient determination and energy for

the Herculean task of setting, or rather of trying to set things a little to rights, when, at the very moment I was debating in my own mind the *pros* and *cons* of such an attempt, the Father Ministro came into the school-room, and made known to the Prefetto that, by order of the Father Rettore, Mr. Lorenzo and Mr. Alfred were to pass from the Second Division to the First. The Father Rettore, who was aware of the tender friendship which bound me to Alfred, had determined not to separate us ; for which kind attention I felt in my heart profoundly grateful.

This promotion could not have come more opportunely, for it took me out of a terrible puzzle. We made a bundle of our books and papers, shook hands with our late companions, and five minutes afterwards we were settled in the school-room of the First Division, the members of which received us with marked sympathy and cordiality.

CHAPTER XI.

SOME NEW CHARACTERS INTRODUCED. THE FIRST DIVISION REBELS, AND CARRIES ITS POINT.

I WAS very happy and very busy. Besides my every-day tasks, I had to prepare for the examinations, which were to take place in a month. Moreover, I had to write a grand composition in blank verse, which I was to recite at the next distribution of prizes, and to finish a large pencil drawing, which was to be exhibited on the same occasion. Add to all this, that as I had a good ear and an agreeable voice, I had been chosen as tenor in a cantata for three voices, to be sung at the same solemnity. So that every day I spent one or two hours studying my part with the music-master, who made me learn it by heart, for I could not read the notes.

Thus agreeably occupied, on very good terms with all my comrades, my dear Alfred by my side, with the prospect of a whole harvest of prizes, and of shortly leaving school—truly I had nothing to wish for; and I looked upon the incessant agitations of the Second Division with the somewhat selfish feeling described by the poet, of a man who from the shore contemplates a vessel in the offing beaten by the tempest. I had never been so happy. Who could have

guessed, alas! that, in the midst of this deceitful calm, I was on the eve of a crisis, one of the most painful in my life!

The play-ground of the First Division looked, on the southern side, over a yard full of rotten timber and rubbish, among which sported innumerable rats, to which we used to throw bread and fruit. The sight of these animals developed, it would seem, in one of our school-fellows named Vadoni, the organ of rat-hunting. First, he declared war against them by pelting them with stones; then he tried to fish them up by means of a hook fastened to a piece of pack-thread. At last he took it in his head to make a sort of rat-trap, which he used to let down every day into the yard by a cord; and you might have seen Vadoni standing for hours together, on the same spot, and watching the slightest motions of the nimble tenants of the yard, with a degree of patience, or rather with an intensity of interest worthy of a better cause, and rarely rewarded by success. Truly that rat must have sinned greatly, or fasted long indeed, who could have allowed himself to be caught in such an awkward trap. It was a rare, yet not unprecedented case, and just a fortnight after my entrance into the first company, as chance, or rather my ill luck would have it, an ill-starred rat happened to be taken. These captures were an event for the whole set, inasmuch as they afforded occasion to a barbarous sport, for, to the shame of the civilisation of the college be it said, the poor prisoners were consigned to an *auto-da-fé*, that is to say, first besmeared with turpentine, and then set fire to and left to run free, to the great amusement of the bystanders.

Well, then, on the day of the capture I have just mentioned, at a signal given by the bell, we formed our ranks, two and two, as usual, and marched towards the school-room, Vadoni carrying his rat-trap on his shoulder as a trophy. We had to pass through a narrow dark passage leading to the broad one we have more than once had occasion to mention. In this first passage we met the Vice-Rettore, who stopped to see us file off before him. The Vice-Rettore was a strange being, or rather there were in him two distinct and quite different beings. The Vice-Rettore of the morning was a pale, taciturn, grave, and even melancholy man. The Vice-Rettore of after dinner (the dinner hour of the reverend fathers was one o'clock) underwent a complete transformation, that is to say, not only in his humour, but even in his external appearance. With lustrous eyes, and high-coloured cheeks, the Vice-Rettore became brisk, talkative, and full of tricks. One of his favourite tricks—I regret it was not in better taste, was this—when he chanced to meet a company moving along, he would stop as if to see it pass, then all of a sudden, seizing a propitious moment, he would fling out his leg, and give a good kick to some pupil in the rear, who might not be on his guard. As this way of his was very well known, from the moment the Vice-Rettore's black gown was seen to loom in the distance, every one was on the alert, and all passed before the worthy father, looking out carefully, and under visible anxiety. This sort of terror, which he excited on his passage, seemed to amuse the good man vastly, and to add a certain zest to his jocularity.

It happened that the storm on this day was to fall upon poor Vadoni. He was watching the monk closely out of the corner of his eye, and perceiving a suspicious movement, made a sudden start to avoid what it portended: in so doing, he let slip the rat-trap he was carrying on his shoulder, which opened as it fell. Quick as lightning out darted the prisoner, and struck slap against the Vice-Rettore's face, who, either from the violence of the blow, or in consequence of the surprise, fell backwards at full length upon the floor. All this passed in less than ten seconds. We roared with laughter at the mischance of the jocular father, and thought he had only got what he deserved.

A quarter of an hour afterwards Vadoni was sent for by the Father Rettore. The bell rang for school, and Vadoni did not appear; in due course, the play hour came, and we returned to the play-ground. Vadoni was still absent. Supper time was near, and still no Vadoni. There could be no further doubt: he must be in prison. From that moment, the greatest excitement prevailed in the whole set. "It is an injustice, an infamous injustice, we cannot put up with it." We gathered together in a large group to deliberate. Several proposals were thrown out without leading to any conclusion. "Let us send a deputation to the Father Rettore," cried a voice. No one seemed anxious to form part of this deputation, as no one supported the motion. Only Sforza, who had remained silent till then, shrugged his shoulders, saying, "Nonsense."

Sforza, whom we have had occasion to mention once in the

course of this history, had emerged from his insignificance, and acquired a sudden degree of importance by an act of courage well worthy of being mentioned. One day his Prefetto in a rage had threatened him with corporal punishment. Sforza calmly drew out his pen-knife, saying, in an attitude of firm expectation, "Come on, if you dare!" The determined bearing of the youth had awed the priest, who desisted from his threat, and from that day Sforza was considered as the most spirited fellow of our set.

The general excitement went on increasing; there was a vast expenditure of talk and gesture without any result, when Sforza began thus—"Of what use is talking? You are like the rats who would fain have put a bell round the neck of the cat, but did not know how. Fewer words and more action. Will you trust to me? I warrant that within two hours Vadoni shall be restored to the company." "But how?" exclaimed a dozen voices. "It don't signify *how*-ing, what we want is to have back Vadoni, and words won't give him to us. Once more, will you trust to me, and do as I bid you?" The boy had never made so long a speech in his life.

It is said that in times of revolution strong and energetic natures find their place, and assume command as their inherent right; and it is certain that at this moment each of us felt the superiority of Sforza, and acknowledged in him our legitimate leader in the coming crisis. He looked really fine, and his brown features, animated as they were, breathed energy and resolution. Each gave him a hand in token of

assent and promise, and two messengers were forthwith despatched to the Second and Third Divisions, with a strict injunction implicitly to follow the example of the First.

The bell for supper rang. We had just taken our seats in the refectory, when the Vice-Rettore, who habitually presided at our meals, made his appearance, and a volley of hisses and groans rose from our table. The Second and the Third, faithful to their orders, sent forth a loud echo, and even the lower companies, from a spirit of imitation, joined in the uproar. The Vice-Rettore became as red and angry as a turkey-cock, and ordered "Silence!" Fresh groans, fresh hisses, mixed with cries of "Where is Vadoni?"—"We'll have Vadoni!" broke forth from every corner of the refectory, and drowned the words of the incensed superior. The tumult and disorder continued without intermission. The voice of the *lecturer*, (it was the custom during the first part of the repast for one of the pupils so termed to read aloud, and silence was absolutely required), his voice, I say, was lost amid a roar of loud talking in the whole community. The poor fellow wasted his breath in vain. At last he stopped, threw a piteous look at the Father Vice-Rettore, as much as to say, "You see that it's all labour lost," shut the book, and came down from the reading-desk. The defection of the lecturer was saluted by a universal shout of laughter, and cries of "Well done!—well done!—Down with the tyrant! —Hurrah for Vadoni!—We'll have Vadoni!"

As a means of cutting short the disturbance, the Vice-Rettore bethought himself of shortening supper, and made

haste to give the signal of retreat by saying grace before the time. The lower companies rose as usual, at this sign, but the First protested, and remained seated at table, crying, "We have not supped!"—"Vadoni, Vadoni!" The Second and Third did the same. The two inferior ones, who had already risen, resumed their seats. The baffled superior tried an act of authority; he seized one of our set by the collar, and endeavoured to pull him from his seat by force. The whole company rose as one man, and ran to the rescue of the comrade thus attacked. A regular struggle ensued between the Vice-Rettore, seconded by our Prefetto, and the whole First Division, supported by the Second and Third. The two priests were soon worsted, pushed by the ever-increasing flood of pupils towards the entrance, and finally driven out of the refectory, the door of which was shut upon them. Remaining thus masters of the field, we celebrated our victory by frantic hurrahs, without thinking any more of the supper. Everybody was too much excited to think of eating.

Ten minutes later, the door opened again, and the Father Ministro entered. This looked like another victory; the Vice-Rettore dared not show his face. Yet, as there was nothing menacing in the aspect of the Father Ministro, he met with no hostile reception. He did not say one word. After waiting a few moments he began to chant the grace, to which, more or less decently the responses came. The Divisions formed themselves two and two, and filed off, the First as usual taking the lead.

The door of the refectory opened upon the play-ground of

the second company, in which has passed the principal part of the events we have recounted in this history. On the right hand of the refectory door was a staircase leading to the upper story, in which were situated the school-rooms and dormitories. Instead of turning to the right in the direction of the staircase, at a word of command from Sforza our company turned to the left, and scattered itself in the wide-spreading play-ground. The Divisions that followed did in like manner, and all the sets, mingling into one great body, began to march round the square, vociferating, yelling, howling, and hissing. The predominant cry was ever, "Vadoni, we'll have Vadoni!—down with the Vice-Rettore!" The scene of tumult and confusion baffles all description. The Father Ministro, the Prefetti, the servants, each carrying a light, rushed from side to side, bawling, entreating, gesticulating, like men possessed. Here and there they would pull away some chance-isolated pupil, and try to make him a rallying point, but as fast as they brought in some new recruits, the former escaped, so that they had to begin anew. It was really like the work of the Danaides. Each column of the cloister furnished a hiding-place, and favoured the manœuvres of the runaways. Truly it was a new kind of coursing, and who knows when it might have ended; but that, after an hour, the sport became monotonous and tiresome, so that, out of mere weariness, the companies formed anew by degrees, and of their own accord made their way up stairs to the dormitories.

Now, we had lost our faithful auxiliaries, and we had but

our own resources to depend upon in order to carry on the agitation, and bring it to a result in the liberation of Vadoni. "He who goes to bed before Vadoni is given back to us is a coward," cried Sforza, who during the exercise of his generalship had proved himself well worthy of the chief command. This little devil was seen everywhere, and always in the foremost line, incessantly animating the rest by word and example. It was then a settled point that nobody should go to bed; but something must be done to kill time. Sforza organized a march, with military step, up and down the dormitory. We marched four abreast, mimicking the flourishes of trumpets, and every now and then stopping to roar out, "Vadoni, we'll have Vadoni!"

However, the whole night could not be passed in this amusement, and I do not know whether we should not have ended by going quietly to bed, if no one had interfered. In truth, the only reasonable plan would have been to let the fire spend itself, and I cannot conceive how the masters did not adopt this expedient. As I have hinted, a sort of languor was beginning to creep over the agitators, when the Father Ministro took up the unlucky idea of coming to try and do something. His appearance had the effect of a barrel of oil thrown upon only half-extinguished embers. Howling, screaming, cries of "Vadoni," all began again worse than ever. A sort of fury seized all minds. Suddenly Sforza caught hold of the coverlets of his bed, and flung them into the middle of the dormitory. The other pupils followed his example. After the covering came the pillows, then the mattresses. An enormous heap of bedding thus arose in the

middle of the room. What was the object of this operation? It had none. It was said afterwards, and the superiors accredited the report, which has taken root in the college as a tradition of terror, that our intention was to set fire to the bedding. No such thing. Neither Sforza nor any of the rest uttered a word, or had the remotest idea, connected in the slightest degree, with so rash a deed. It is possible, nay, even probable, that a fear of this sort may have crossed the mind of the Prefetto, who left the dormitory some time after, and very likely went to communicate his apprehensions on the subject to the superiors; it is certain, however, that nobody thought of burning anything, and that the sole object we had in view was to do *something*, and to be as unruly and disorderly as possible.

The Prefetto left us, as I have said, and a sort of lull ensued. Every one was worn out, every one felt, besides, that a crisis was approaching, that is to say, that things had been pushed far enough to call for the intervention of that dreaded power which was unwilling to show itself, except when there was a *dignus vindice nodus*. Each was, therefore, collecting courage for the decisive trial. The greater number of the set were seated each on the side of his own bed-stead, awaiting in silence what was to ensue.

Our expectation was not deceived. Soon was heard in the distance that piercing voice which had never commanded in vain. The man before whom every will bowed, all resistance yielded, was at hand. "Courage!" cried Sforza, "let us receive him like the rest, and Vadoni is ours." The old monk entered, having on his right the Vice-Rettore, and the

Father Ministro on his left. There was a movement in the room. Some pupils, by the force of long habit, rose in token of respect. Some voices, that of Sforza clearly heard above all others, cried out, "Vadoni, we'll have Vadoni;" but they were an insignificant minority.

"Silence!" thundered the terrible voice, "who dares to utter a word in my presence?" A pause—universal silence. "What is the meaning of all this? No one *wills* here but I. Enough of this scandalous riot. Immediate and entire submission can alone secure pardon for those who have been led astray. As to the ringleaders——." At this critical moment, the lamp which lighted the dormitory, struck by some ponderous projectile, fell broken into shivers, and went out. Darkness restored courage to the timid. Cries, stamping, groans, recommenced more violently than ever. The iron bed-steads were set jogging, which made a frightful clatter. No means of making one's self heard. The blow which had extinguished the lamp had secured victory for the rebellious. Authority was vanquished.

We remained in the dark about a quarter of an hour. When light was brought we beheld Vadoni coming in, half asleep, and seeming to understand nothing of what was going on about him. "Three cheers for Vadoni!" We hoisted him on a chair, and carried him in triumph round the dormitory. This done, each fished out of the heap of bedding wherewithal to make his bed, and ten minutes later, silence and sleep reigned within those walls which had recently resounded with such deafening noise.

CHAPTER XII.

THE TABLES TURNED, DAMON AND PYTHIAS, TRIUMPHAL EXIT FROM SCHOOL.

THE moment of awaking after having committed some great folly, is very disagreeable. This we experienced on the following morning. My conscience, I confess, was far from easy, and the reflections of my comrades, to judge from their long faces, must have been anything but cheerful. While we were still dressing, the Father Vice-Rettore came into the dormitory, and took the Prefetto aside: they had a long confabulation together. At the end of the conversation, the Prefetto went out, and the Vice-Rettore remained in his stead. Without being a conjuror, it was easy to guess that the Prefetto had been sent for to give some information touching the rebellion of the preceding evening. There was evidently a storm in the air. I whispered as much to Sforza as we entered the school-room together. "Well, they won't hang us!" replied he. Most likely not, that was a consolation.

The Vice-Rettore looked big and fierce. The Prefetto came back after an absence of about an hour, and the Vice-Rettore left. There was an awful solemnity in the aspect of the Prefetto. We dared not breathe. Ten minutes had

scarcely elapsed, when the Vice-Rettore returned, followed by a servant. "Vadoni," said he, frowning, "leave your place." Vadoni came forward, as white as a sheet. The servant, upon a sign from the monk, emptied Vadoni's desk of his books and papers, and made a bundle of them. We all knew what that meant. The poor boy, no doubt, thought himself under the influence of nightmare.

Poor Vadoni! if ever there was an innocent being unjustly condemned it was surely he! Not only was he free from all reproach, but he was one of the candidates for the prize of good behaviour, *alias* the prize of the *geese*. The superiors ought to have gone down on their knees and begged pardon for the hours of imprisonment unjustly inflicted on him, and they expelled him! But Vadoni's crime was having served as a standard, and schools also have their reasons of state—a plague on it, the more the pity! After Vadoni, it was Sforza's turn. No change came over his brow; his countenance did not betray the least emotion, only in the corner of his mouth lurked a curl of defiance. There was the stuff of a man in that boy!

The hour which followed these two executions appeared to us very long; it passed in a state of anxiety impossible to be described. Breakfast came, however, without further incident. The bell rang for school, and we began to breathe more freely. Just as I was going into school I was told that the singing-master had come, and that I was to go and take my lesson. It lasted unusually long, and by the time it was ended the boys were returned from the classes to the school-

room, where I joined them. Alfred was not in his place. A giddiness came over me. Could it be that he had been expelled? I questioned my neighbour, and learned from him that Alfred, during the class, had been sent for by the Father Rettore, and had not re-appeared. This intelligence, as may well be supposed, did not lessen my anxiety. Under some pretext, I went to Alfred's desk; his books and papers were there. This circumstance somewhat reassured me. But, at each minute that elapsed, my anxiety returned, and became more and more intense. I was really at a loss what to think and what to do, when one of my companions, who had been out to the dressing-room to try on a new coat, came in, and shewed me from a distance, unseen by the Prefetto, a folded paper, upon which he wrote some words. This paper, passed from hand to hand, soon reached me. It bore no address. On the outside were these words, "Given me by Alfred, whom I met in the dressing-room." I opened the note precipitately. It contained what follows, written in pencil:—

"I am expelled. I could not do otherwise than confess that it was I who broke the lamp. I hope that *no one* will cast a doubt upon my truth. Don't vex yourself about me. I can easily pacify my father. Yours ever.—ALFRED."

In order to understand this note, some little explanation is necessary. The reader will, no doubt, remember the incident which, on the night of the disturbance, cut short the speech of the Father Rettore, and gave the victory to rebellion, I mean the breaking of the lamp which lighted our dormitory.

Well—in all humility I confess it—I was the author of the deed! The instrument I had made use of was a shoe, the first thing that came under my hand. My bed and Alfred's being close to each other, the shoe of which I made a projectile, as my evil star would have it, belonged to him. Some one, most likely the Prefetto, had picked it up, as evidence for the inquest. As soon as Alfred, when called before the Father Rettore, had his shoe presented to him, he instantly understood that the only means of saving me was to adopt the misdemeanour, and, dear boy! he had not hesitated to sacrifice himself for me.

Alfred's note was a thunderbolt to me. His devotion called up all the generous instincts of my nature. I did not hesitate in my turn. I rushed instantly to the Father Rettore's room. "Father, it was I who broke the lamp. Alfred is innocent. Punish me, for I deserve it; but it were unjust that the innocent should suffer for the guilty."

The Father Rettore did not probably expect such a complicating occurrence. He was highly provoked, and could not restrain a burst of impatience. "What is the meaning of this?" cried he, rising, and striking the table violently; "is authority become a mockery, that the credit of a bad deed is to be contended for? Your wishes shall be gratified, Sir," and he lifted his hand to seek the bell. But it stopped half way, and then returned to its former position. The Father Rettore resumed his seat, and continued in these words:—"Thank my forbearance, Sir, for allowing this unpleasant incident to pass without further notice. Return

to your studies. I am not the dupe of your would-be Pythias-like sacrifice. Alfred has confessed, and Alfred is consequently punished. Justice is satisfied. You may contrive to be lost with him, but you cannot save him. His expulsion is irrevocable." I began to stammer out some observation. "Silence!" thundered the Father, "I do not choose to hear; I do not choose to know any more. We sought one of the guilty; we have found him. Do not force me to give a cause of affliction to your mother. Go, I say!" What could I do but obey? I obeyed.

Was the incredulity of the Father Rettore with respect to my culpability real or assumed? The time of the examinations and of the distribution of prizes, was fast approaching, as I have already said, and on both these occasions I was destined to come off with considerable honour to myself—honour which would naturally be reflected back upon the establishment. The next who, in case of my absence, would have made the best figure, was a day-scholar, who held the first place after me in the classes. Now, the Reverend Fathers did not much like that the day-scholars should outshine their boarders. Had these considerations any weight in determining the conduct of the Father Rettore towards me? I merely lay the question before the reader, leaving it to his sagacity to decide the point. This is certain, that when he expressed the wish to spare my mother sorrow, he was quite sincere; for, as I have already had occasion to say, he had the greatest respect for that most excellent and pious woman.

To appreciate the extent of Alfred's sacrifice, the unfortunate consequences of an expulsion from school must be explained. In a country despotically governed, as ours was, where everybody—young and old—was fashioned to passive obedience, any act betraying independence, even a childish freak, was looked upon as a crime against the State, and the advancement in life of a young man who had given way to such was most seriously impeded. A pupil expelled from one of the public establishments for education, found the career of public employment insuperably shut against him, as well as that of the liberal professions, such as law, medicine, and others, for which a university degree was necessary, because the university was closed for ever to the unfortunate youth who had been turned out of school. Reason revolts against the idea of a punishment so entirely out of proportion to the offence; but such, unluckily, was the state of things in Piedmont in the year of grace 1822.

With Alfred I had lost all the interest of my school life, and the two months I had to remain in the college after his departure became a complete blank to me, and seemed dreadfully long. My only consolation during this time was seeing him on those days when we walked out, (for he never failed to put himself in our way,) and exchanging with him a few words or a shake of the hand, and admiring his good looks in his young man's dress.

At length came the day of deliverance. The distribution of the prizes took place, as usual, in the College Church. The high altar was transformed for the occasion into an

amphitheatre of benches, rising one above another, whereon we sat in state, with white cravats and white cotton gloves. The spectators, chiefly composed of the parents and acquaintances of the pupils, sat thickly ranged in the nave. The Archbishop, the Governor of the military division, and the President of the Senate, filled seats of honour.

The cantata went off very well, and the public called for the reappearance of the singers twice over. My hymn to Providence, in blank verse, repeated with great animation, was also rewarded with loud applause. Then the names of the pupils marked to receive prizes were called in succession, beginning with the inferior classes. At last came the Class of Rhetoric—"First prize in Latin verse, Master Lorenzo." I came down from the raised form, and went to receive a wreath of laurel and some books from the hands of the Archbishop. By the public, who had already seen me twice, I was clamorously welcomed. I was half way up the steps returning to my place, when my name again resounded—"First prize in Italian Poetry, Master Lorenzo." I could only lay my wreath and books upon a step, and return to receive fresh books and another wreath. This time it was my mother who placed it on my head, with tears of joy in her eyes, and tenderly embracing me. The audience, touched and surprised, burst into thunders of applause. As I was returning to my place, my name was called again, and I found myself once more in the same embarrassment as before —"Prize of Geometry, Master Lorenzo." The prize of geometry had scarcely been awarded, when that of drawing

came close upon its heels, also to "Master Lorenzo." It is impossible to describe the enthusiasm that followed.

The first prize of Eloquence, or Latin prose, as the most important, was reserved for the last, and was termed "the highest first prize of the whole distribution." All the prizes but this one being disposed of, there was a pause; then the orchestra played a tune, which being ended, there was a minute of thrilling expectation,—deep silence, and every ear upon the stretch—"The highest first prize of the whole distribution, Master Lorenzo!" Who could paint the excitement that ran through the assembly at this announcement? The Father Rettore rose, came towards me, and threw himself into my arms in tears. Poor Signor Lanzi positively sobbed aloud. The applause became, if possible, more frantic. I was deeply moved, very happy, at this moment. There was especially one pair of little hands never still, always clapping with incessant vigour, which I never lost sight of, and whose approbation went directly to my heart.

After the distribution, we went into the refectory, where a capital supper awaited us, at which the relations of the pupils who had got prizes were allowed to be present. Alfred, holding by the skirts of my mother's gown, glided after her into the apartment. Another sort of ovation was there in store for me. All the pupils, as well as the superiors, came, one after another, to embrace me. The ladies and gentlemen present chose to do the same. Every one would see and touch the little prodigy! What with questions, praises, and caresses, I was half stifled. When, at length, supper ended,

and the general enthusiasm began to calm, I took leave of the kind Father Rettore, and of all the Reverend Fathers present, and, tottering under my load of books and wreaths, I left school—this time to return no more. Arm-in-arm with Alfred, in company with my father and mother and two of my brothers, I went home.

CHAPTER XIII.

ABSURD NOTIONS AND TIMELY CHECKS; I PURSUE MY STUDIES AT THE SEMINARY, AND LIGHT UPON AN OLD FOE.

THAT the unprecedented success I had obtained, and the kind of ovation of which I had been the hero, had a little turned my head, is a thing not to be wondered at; nor was the unbounded admiration of Alfred, and the mode in which he gave vent to it, calculated to lessen the sort of intoxication under which I was labouring; and if I did not exactly enter the world in the attitude of a conqueror, lance in rest, I must yet allow that the feeling predominant in me at the time was, that society at large, on the day of my accession to it, had had the benefit of a rather important acquisition. My organ of self-conceit, which was fast developing, was not, however, destined to do so long unchecked.

It was about a question of great moment to me—the question of my equipment—that the notion of my own importance met with a sudden check. I had proffered a request for two complete suits, and expected to be complimented on my modesty. Quite the contrary. My father made a wry face, expressive of anything but approbation, and observed drily, that "articles of dress were exorbitantly dear, and that two suits were too much by half. What could I want with

two suits, which I should have out-grown by next year? A suit of black for holidays, *when it was fine weather*, was all that I could want. As for every-day wear, my college uniform, properly altered, would do very well." My mortification at the opposition I met with was extreme. Among my school-fellows some had been promised a gold repeater, nay, some a horse, a real live horse, for a tenth part of the honours I had obtained, while I was grudged two miserable suits of clothes! Could there be anything too much for a "highest first prize of the whole distribution?" Why, if I had thought fit to ask for a mantle of purple and ermine, who dared say that I had no claim to one!

My mother did not fail to plead my wonderful success. "Tut, tut;" replied my father with a tone of impatience, "each of his brothers has done as much." Go, then, and conquer the world, to be told that Alexander and Cæsar existed before you!

However, the point was carried somehow or other, and I had *carte blanche* for two complete suits. Two portentous questions now arose, which wholly engrossed my thoughts: what materials had I best choose? and which was the cut calculated to display my person to the best advantage? I had no one to consult, for, on the very day following that of the distribution, Alfred had gone to spend the holidays in the country with his family, and of my two brothers who were at home, the youngest, who was about to succeed me at college, inspired me with no confidence in his taste, while the eldest was so much of a man that I shrank from exposing

before him the weakness of my vanity. Cæsar, my elder by eighteen months, the only one who could have helped me, was gone on a visit to our uncle the Canon, to recover, by change of air, from the effects of scarlet fever. So I was left entirely to my own inspiration. At last I determined that a man of my consequence could not do without a suit of black. Suppose—and what was more likely—that the archbishop or the governor of the town were to send for me, or even, who knows, that I should be summoned to court? Positively, I must have a suit of black. For the second, I chose a coat of very shining chesnut cloth, and sky-blue pantaloons, adding most particular instructions to the tailor to give to the whole a cut in the latest fashion, which, by the by, happened to be tolerably absurd. I remember that the pantaloons were what were called "Ypsilanti trousers," very full, with a hundred plaits round the waist, and closing over the boot with a tie. Coats, "fish-tail coats," as they were styled, had huge collars, and long narrow flaps. My sole occupation for a week was to go several times a-day to the tailor's, to watch over the making up of these beautiful materials, and hurry the delivery of the longed-for habiliments.

The choice of a hat also engaged much of my attention. Heads at that time were divided between two systems of hats—narrow-brimmed short-napped hats, and broad-brimmed long-napped ones. After mature reflection, I decided in favour of the broad-brimmed, of course the shape that least became me. At length my whole equipment was completed; and, one fine Sunday morning, I was at last able to

admire myself in the glass, attired in a chesnut coat, sky-blue trousers, fancy waistcoat and cravat, my hat placed slightly on one side, white cotton gloves, and a whalebone switch in my hand. Thus adorned, and not a little pomatumed, I sallied forth, to pay a visit to my uncle John.

Uncle John was my mother's only surviving brother, and her senior by twenty years at least. My mother, who valued and loved him dearly, had particularly desired that my first visit should be to pay my respects to him. Uncle John was to me more like an abstract being than a living man, inasmuch as there was no one whose name I had heard so often, and whose face I had seen so seldom. His visits to me, during my five years of college, had amounted, at the most, perhaps to a dozen, and then he was always in a hurry. The only impression left with me by these visits—but that a deep-rooted one—was, that uncle John did not like boys, and this feeling, now reviving in full force, was far from adding to my self-possession.

I found my uncle reading, and as he bent over his book, I could not help being struck by the noble regularity of his profile, and the pensive expression of his countenance. As I found afterwards, he was a living picture of Leonardo da Vinci. Though sixty years of age, his hair, which he wore very short, was still black, slightly sprinkled with grey, which produced a bluish tint, very singular, but soft and agreeable to the eye. "Hey, hey, my boy," cried uncle John, as soon as he saw me; "how spruce we are!" and he rose from his chair, as if the better to examine me. "What

tailor has made such a figure of you?" I blushed up to the eyes. "Don't be abashed, my boy," continued he, "I have been as absurd as that myself in my time. Most men who dress, (savages who do not are far superior to us in this respect,) most men, I say, are subject to become the victims of their tailors. Nobody knows how to dress before forty. Now, what I mean to say is, that if your father has the good sense to confide you to my care, (my uncle's *beau idéal* for me was, that I should enter commerce under his guidance, a prospect which my father abhorred,) this is not the equipment in which I should wish to see you walking about *Banchi*." Such is the name of the Exchange, near which my uncle had lived for the last twenty years of his life.

I knew not what to say, and therefore remained silent. Uncle John then turned the conversation upon my late success, and complimented me highly. "I have read with pleasure your Hymn to Providence," said he, "and I see that you have a happy knack at versifying; but—*verba, verba, praetereaque nihil.* You must learn to condense. To condense, my dear fellow, is the great secret of art. Here is the noble master who will teach you this. Read Dante through ten times," added uncle John, tapping the open volume before him; "and then, if you have time, and a mind for it, set to writing verses; but not before—not before—do you take me?" I think I did.

What with the novelty of the remarks thus offered, and the tone, half earnest half jeering, in which they were uttered, I was rather bewildered, and very ill at ease; so, as soon as

I could with any degree of propriety, I rose to go. "Well, my boy," said my uncle, shaking me warmly by the hand, "if you can bear to hear an honest truth roughly told, without its making you too angry, come and see me often; and, never mind if I do pique you a little now and then; it is all for your good. So now good bye!"

When I got into the street, on leaving my uncle's house, I felt that I did not walk along with the same assurance as I had done half an hour before. His remarks had produced upon me something like the effect of a bucket of cold water thrown over a man in full perspiration. Nevertheless, I was set agoing, and on I must go: so I made my way to "Our Lady of the Vines," the fashionable church, and attended the one o'clock mass, the fashionable mass. I then joined the crowd of exquisites, who, ranged in a double row on each side of the portal, watched the ladies as they streamed forth from church, and compared notes. Apparently the fame of my high deeds had not yet made its way to this quarter. I created no sensation at all; no lady, young or old, blushed or fainted at the sight of me. No one evinced the slightest symptom of curiosity, sympathy, or wonder. Nobody came and said, "You are the young man who got so many prizes! I admire you!" or anything of the kind. I paced up and down the *Via Balbi Nuova* and *Nuovissima*, and in the evening went to the *Acquasola*, the public walk frequented by the elegant world. There were two military bands playing there, and the crowd was immense; but not a single soul took the slightest notice of me, or of my chesnut

coat and sky-blue pantaloons. And when, tired and dispirited, I got home at night, I found no summons from either the archbishop or the governor.

Next day I began again, and several days following, but with no better success. The only adventures I met with during my perambulations were not much calculated to enhance my good opinion of myself. Once I got into a quarrel with two boys, who had taken the liberty of laughing in my face, and who called me snob and jackanapes, and threatened to break my own cane across my back. Another time, at the fashionable Cairo *Caffé*, the glass out of which I was taking an ice slipt from my hands and fell to the ground, and its contents, besides damaging not a little my Ypsilantis, bespattered the white gown of a young lady, who unfortunately happened to be seated near me. Now this was very awkward, and as all eyes in the room, which was crowded, told me so, my confusion was extreme. At the end of a fortnight my fit of vanity was considerably abated; and I asked myself—to what purpose all this waste of time, boots, and jessamine pomatum? This life of self-exhibition was, in truth, little consonant with my nature, and I gave it up without regret. I staid at home, and took to reading.

I read from morning till night. Novels, fairy tales, tales of chivalry in verse and prose, travels; in short, whatever came to my hand I devoured with ever-craving avidity. I used to spend the whole day in a solitary little room in the remotest corner of the house, where it seemed to me that I enjoyed my books more, and there, plunged in a sort of

ecstasy, I forgot completely the external world. Fiction obliterated reality. What an inexhaustible mine of new pleasures, of delicious emotions, opened upon me! The wonderful, especially, had an irresistible attraction; and when my mother prevailed upon me to go out to walk, how great was my reluctance to leave, how great my rapture to return to my darling books! One of those which made me at once most happy and most miserable, was the adventures of "Paul and Virginia." I have shed more tears over that little volume than would suffice to drown once more its unfortunate heroine. Another book, Mrs. Radcliffe's "Italian," made a most profound impression upon me. There was, in particular, a certain *bravo* named Spalatro, a mysterious, wretched habitation on the sea-shore, and in one of the chambers on the ground-floor a certain sack that moved of itself, which filled me with a most delicious terror. How often, starting from sleep in the dead of night, have I fancied that I saw this dreadful sack at the foot of my bed, on which the moon was shining!

But my health soon began to suffer from this sedentary life, my appetite failed, and my legs would scarcely support me. My mother perceived this, and hastened the moment of our annual removal to the country-house I have already mentioned, where I had felt so much *ennui* a few months previously. I was forbidden to take any books with me. Two months passed in the open air among the hills, and in constant exercise, did me a great deal of good; and when, at the close of the vacation, towards the

end of October, the family returned to town, I was completely restored.

It was about this period that I went, for the first time, to the theatre. The orchestra, the ballet, the dresses, the scenery, the singing, that varied yet harmonizing whole which constitutes an opera, produced upon me such an extraordinary effect as no words can describe. It was as if a new being had arisen within me, a being possessing powers hitherto unknown, and capable of the greatest things. What would I not have given for an opportunity of trying this new strength, and of signalizing myself in some way! A slight idea of my excitement may be formed, when I say that I went home with a fit of fever, which kept me three days in bed.

One evening, a short time after our return, my father called me into his study. My father had a very large head, and wore powder and a pig-tail. I don't know how it was, but I never felt at ease in his presence, and this feeling, instead of diminishing, daily increased. He habitually kept me, and indeed all of us, at a distance. It had never chanced that he had caressed me in private, as my mother would do, though more than once—on the day of the distribution of prizes, for instance—he had embraced me in public. When I say he had embraced me, I use a figure of speech; I ought to say he had offered me his cheek to kiss. It was a strictly exacted custom that all his children, on entering his presence, should kiss his hand, and address him in the third person, the most deferential mode of speaking in Italian.

My father told me that now I had had plenty of idleness, and that it was high time to put an end to this way of going on; that I must work; that he should never consent to my going into commerce; that he left me the choice between medicine and law; that, for the one as well as for the other, it was indispensable to go through the Class of Philosophy; that the University being closed, he saw only two establishments in which I could—as a day-scholar of course—attend the lectures on philosophy during the two required years, that is, either the Royal College or the Seminary, (the name given to an establishment for the education more particularly of young people destined to the Church,) that, as for him, he would recommend the College, but he left me the choice.

Now, this was leaving me a choice of evils. To go to the Royal College as a day-scholar was literally impossible. "Why so?" you will say. You may try a hundred or a thousand times without guessing right. My father, as I have mentioned, had insisted that the coat in which I had left school, and which, with a little alteration, was a good one, should be my every-day wear. Now, for one who had left school to appear in public with the ex-uniform somewhat new-fashioned, was the very lowest degree of disgrace; and to show myself every day among my late companions in that unhappy predicament, would have been to expose myself wantonly to a life of ridicule and humiliation, of which I knew too well the bitterness to have any wish to taste it. So the Royal College was out of the question.

The Seminary also had its inconveniences. There existed

in Genoa three establishments for the education of youth, the Royal College, the Seminary, and the Royal Naval College. Now, be it said to the credit of human fraternity, each of these establishments cordially detested, and was in flagrant hostility with each of its rivals, and each pupil of each establishment had a spite against, and was at open warfare with, all and every one of the pupils of the two others; and many a time had I chanced, while at school, to exchange with my brethren of the Naval College or of the Seminary, an unseen thump with the fist, or a poke with the shoulder in a church, or an insulting gesture in the street; so that I ran the risk of meeting in the Seminary with some old antagonist, and of being forced to continue a struggle I would just as soon have dropped. However this might be, my choice between a certain and an uncertain evil could not be doubtful; my option, therefore, was for the Seminary, and I wrote immediately to acquaint Alfred with my determination. A few days later, Alfred returned, bringing with him, to my great joy, the consent of his father to his going through his Class of Philosophy at the Seminary.

My new duties were far from burthensome. The lectures began at ten o'clock in the morning, and ended at one in the afternoon. I had all the rest of the day to myself, except on Monday and Thursday, when, from four to six in the afternoon, I attended a lecture on ethics. I had little communication with my new companions, who took little notice of me. Alfred's company was all that I wanted, and we were together from morning to night. We used, in the afternoon,

to take long walks, or to go boating when it was very fine, and we would then chat endlessly about our future prospects, planning to remain inseparable all our lives.

A dark point, however, soon appeared on my horizon, under the form of a great Seminarist, twice as big as myself, who, as it seems, had not been long in recognising me, and whom, on my part, I knew well long before. This fellow began to cast certain looks of bravado at me, which I chose not to perceive. The looks were soon followed by rude jests, and even direct insults. One morning, when I was quite off my guard, he shouldered me so violently as he passed, that he all but threw me to the ground. Of course I resented this proceeding, and a quarrel in due form ensued. From that moment such a system of incessant hostilities was entered upon by my big adversary, as to imbitter my life. One day he made me the laughing-stock of the whole school by fastening a long paper tail behind my back. I was in a rage, and swore to make him pay for this out of class; but I sought him in vain, and so I went home fretting and fuming, and forming projects of revenge.

Since my return to town, I had resumed my reading, and at this moment my book was the *Life of the Blessed Fra Martino of Lisbon*, which interested me very much. Fra Martino was a saint, and as such, performed most wonderful feats. He was, for instance, at one and the same time, in China converting idolaters, and in Lisbon attending on his dying mother. As I went on reading that day, I happened to fall upon a passage which struck me forcibly, from its

perfect reference and applicability to my own case. Poor Fra Martino, when very young at school, had a little scoundrel of a companion, who jeered, worried, beat, and ill-used him in every possible manner. Good Fra Martino did not lose patience, entertained no resentment, thought not of taking revenge; but, by dint of forbearance, gentleness, and submission, touched and edified his young persecutor to such a degree, that he soon became Fra Martino's friend and admirer, and ultimately a great saint.

For some time past I had been in a mood of religious enthusiasm, and I asked myself whether this passage, which so clearly pointed out the method I ought to follow with my Seminarist, was not a warning from God. To make a saint of one's persecutor, what a noble vengeance! To become a saint myself, to go to China and face martyrdom, like Fra Martino! My imagination was set working in that direction, and I determined to try St. Martino's method.

CHAPTER XIV.

RELIGIOUS ENTHUSIASM; PROJECTS OF MARTYRDOM ADJOURNED; THINGS COME TO A CRISIS WITH MY BIG PERSECUTOR.

An opportunity soon offered. One day, as we were entering the lecture room, I received a good thump on the head from my adversary. My first impulse was to return it, but I refrained in time. "Sir," said I, "you may do with me as you please, I accept it all in penance for my sins, and I love and bless you." At the first moment my speech seemed to make some impression on my big foe, but this passed away immediately, and he replied jeeringly, "Come, come, this is a good joke enough, but tell the truth, you are afraid;" to which I answered in a very humble tone, "Yes, I am afraid, I allow, greatly afraid of offending God."

As chance would have it, and I purposely say chance, for several days afterwards my persecutor left me in peace. Naturally, I did not fail to attribute this to the efficaciousness of Fra Martino's recipe, and my religious fervour was the more increased. I attended several masses every day, and prayed frequently at home, and still more frequently in the street. Yes, in the street! The Confessor whom I had at College had made me a present of what he called a treasure, namely, a short prayer, which he told me the Holy

Virgin herself had delivered into the hands of St. Bernardo, with the assurance that he who should repeat the sacred words whenever he might meet an image of the Blessed Mary, would be sure of saving his soul. In my fit of devotion, I bethought me of this miraculous prayer, which lay buried among my papers. I looked for it, found it, learned it by heart, and would repeat it in the street before each image of the Virgin that I passed. Now, as there is in Genoa, as everybody knows, a Madonna at every corner, I beg the reader to believe, that this was rather hard work.

One afternoon while I was in this disposition of mind, Alfred and I went to take a long walk among the heights that crown Genoa. Our excursion had proved longer and more fatiguing than we expected, so, before coming down, we stopped to rest, and to enjoy the scene before us. The sun was setting, and as his rosy beams, fast retreating, left hill after hill, and mountain after mountain, they seemed to acquire a soft mellowness of tint, expressive of regret and melancholy. Gradually a dark grey mist overspread the valley beneath, and the bright transparency of the sea faded away by slow degrees, and was lost in one uniform leaden colour. There was in the air that stillness and repose which characterize even-tide when verging towards night. The silvery tinkling of the sheep-bell of belated flocks, and the distant hail from boats far off, at intervals faintly broke upon the silence.

Suddenly the tolling of a bell ringing the Ave Maria rose from a church almost at our feet. It was the Church of St.

Barnabas, to which is annexed a very small Convent belonging to the Capuchin Friars, and where young men who destine themselves to that Order pass the time of their noviciate. This Convent stands perfectly alone on the slope of a barren hill, at all times of a strikingly desolate aspect, but more especially so towards the dusk of evening. We went into the church, which was quite dark, except in one part of the choir, which was feebly lighted by a lamp. Half-a-dozen Capuchin novices were kneeling on the stone pavement, chanting psalms. From time to time some one of them would raise his head towards the image of our Saviour upon the altar, and disclose to view features emaciated by prayer and fasting. The tolling of the bell, the solitude, the hour, had thrown me into a mood of vague and melancholy reverie; the scene in the interior of the church, like a sudden revelation, gave a determinate character to the undefined aspirations swelling in my breast, and moulded them into an actual purpose. An inward voice seemed to say, "Here is what thou seekest!" I prayed long and fervently, and went out of the church with the firm conviction that God had called me to serve Him in solitude and prayer.

I opened my mind forthwith to Alfred, and proposed, without circumlocution, that he should become a Capuchin along with me. Alfred, who was far from being worked up to my pitch of enthusiasm, was much startled at first, but as the idea of our ever separating could not enter his mind, he answered, that if I seriously determined to take the vows, he would undoubtedly follow my example.

At midnight, when from my room I heard the bell of St. Barnabas ring matins, I rose to prayer: and how long afterwards I cannot tell, I awoke with my head resting against a chair, and my whole body frozen with cold.

My vocation appearing to me sufficiently determined to warrant me to talk it over with my confessor, I went to him next day, and related in full detail how and when the disposition to a religious life had first sprung up within me, and under what circumstances it had become strengthened and assumed the character of a positive calling. The priest encouraged me to persevere, and more than hinted that out of cloistral life, salvation was hardly possible, amid the dangers and temptations of the world. "You are too young," continued he, "to take the vows, but not too young to prepare yourself for doing so. Test the sincerity of your vocation by some severe trial, impose each day some voluntary privation upon yourself to mortify the flesh, and above all pray, pray incessantly!"

I was perfectly satisfied, and from that day forward looked upon myself as devoted to the cloister. I mortified the flesh by eating as little as possible and abstaining from all that could please my palate, especially fruit, which I liked much. I heard as many Masses as I could possibly crowd together, and regularly rose and went to prayers at midnight. To make sure of waking at the proper time, I used to tie a pack-thread to one of my wrists, at the other end of which hung a leaden weight, scarcely touching the bottom of a basin placed on the floor; so that my slightest motion had

its echo in the basin, and excluded all possibility of sound sleep.

But this was not sufficient to satisfy my ardour for penance. I longed to have a hair-shirt; but it is not every one who can procure such a thing. I tried, in imitation of Fra Martino, to flagellate myself, and for this purpose I got hold of a whip of leather thongs used in dusting clothes, but somehow or other I never could contrive to inflict upon myself any real pain. For want of something better, I put sand into my boots and filled my bed with crumbs of dry bread, which certainly were excessively disagreeable. At last considering myself sufficiently prepared, I imparted one morning to my mother my irrevocable resolution of giving myself to God, and of taking the habit of a Capuchin as soon as possible.

I expected a scene of cries, and tears, and had excited my imagination with the idea of the strength of mind necessary to overcome the opposition of a mother I adored. Nothing of the kind. My mother did not look shocked at my confidential communication; if she felt so, poor soul! she managed to conceal it pretty well. She only observed that nothing should be done precipitately in so serious a matter, and that I had better consult Uncle John, to which I willingly agreed. Now it happened that on this very morning (how lucky!) my mother met Uncle John in the street, who, on hearing that I wished to consult him on a matter of some consequence, sent me an invitation to come and dine with him next day, precisely at two o'clock, military

time,—only, of course, if my father had no objection, which, happily, he had not.

Uncle John and I had by this time become very good friends. To my credit be it said, his rather blunt reception on the day of my first visit had not estranged me from him. The first smart over, I had soon found that my uncle was right, that is, that my foppish airs made me ridiculous and that my verses were sonorous emptiness. So that, instead of owing him a grudge, I felt the value of his frankness, and told him so. He was touched by my ingenuousness, and hailed with great glee what he called my return to good sense. From that time a sort of intimacy, as far as our difference of age would permit, was established between us. I used to go to see him regularly twice a week, and he would lay aside any business, however pressing, to have a little chat with me. Being first partner in a large banking firm, he was very busy till two o'clock, his dinner hour.

In spite of this sort of intimacy, now of more than six months' standing, all that I knew of Uncle John was, that he had left his country when very young, travelled over all the world, and realized a considerable fortune in commerce: that at forty he had returned, and never left home since: that his turn of mind was very original, and his tone often caustic: that he was very kind to individuals, and very harsh towards mankind at large, upon whom he looked with mingled feelings of pity and distrust. His life, as far as I could conjecture, for both he and my mother, who knew all about it

were on this point invincibly discreet, must have been one of trial and disappointment.

He spoke seldom, and as it were by showers. Sometimes there was no stopping him. When he was vexed, he would bite his nails. The person he loved and respected most in the world was my mother, whom he came to see very regularly, but always at the hours when he knew my father was from home. The two brothers-in-law rarely or never met, except on certain formal occasions, such as my mother's birth-day, when Uncle John came to dine at my father's house, or on my Uncle John's birth-day, when we all went to dine at his.

On the morrow then, having achieved a modest toilet, (pomatum, whalebone switch, and coxcombical airs, had long been put aside, huge coat collars had been lowered, and puffy pantaloons straightened,) at a quarter to two I set out for my uncle's house.

Uncle John's style of living was, like that of the greater number of the burghers of Genoa at that time, simple, and even parsimonious. The house in which he lived was situated in a narrow dirty street, as most of the Genoese streets are. It was choked up in front by another mansion rising just before it at the distance of a few feet, and at the back overlooked a filthy yard. In buying this house, some twenty years before, my uncle had been determined by the single consideration, that it was not above five minutes' walk from Banchi, and that it was sure to let. As to air, open space, or light, he had thought no more about them than if things

of the kind had never existed. Air, light, and prospect were superfluities; if you could have them into the bargain, so much the better, if not, you did just as well without.

The suite of apartments which my uncle occupied on the second floor—the other stories were let—was spacious and lofty, but dark, and looked empty and cold. It was, however, be it said to its credit, deliciously cool in hot weather. The walls were whitewashed, and their nakedness was rather set off to advantage, than concealed, by the half dozen or so of old family portraits that hung here and there. Thinly scattered through the apartments, at a great distance from each other, there stood a few old fashioned, heavy, dark pieces of furniture, looking so lonely in their corners, as to make one feel sorry for them. An ancient Venetian mirror, six feet in height, a dozen old chairs covered with faded yellow velvet, and an enormous clock in tortoiseshell of exquisite workmanship, constituted all the luxury of the drawing-room. But the walls of this drawing-room, which was very large and lofty, were, by a happy exception, filled to an inch by pictures of the best Italian Masters. No arm-chairs, no sofas, no carpets, no lamps, nothing of all that contributes to comfort. Uncle John did not feel the want of it, or rather, was not aware that there was such a thing in the world. He had, in common with most of his countrymen, a strong prejudice against fire, which he declared to be very injurious to health, and the only chimney that existed in his apartment, had been, accordingly, walled up. His only precaution against the

cold, sometimes intense, consisted in rubbing his hands, or, in extreme cases, in going out to walk.

His meals were of patriarchal simplicity. A cup of coffee for breakfast. For dinner, soup, most frequently the national *minestra asciutta*, (that is, a pottage of macaroni or other Italian paste, boiled for a short time, then drained dry, and seasoned with gravy and parmesan cheese,) a dish of meat or fish, a salad, and fruit or cheese. For supper, a dish of boiled vegetables with oil and vinegar, and nothing more. Such was the fare, from which he never deviated, but which he imposed on no one else, for his guests—when he had any, a thing of rare occurrence—always found an excellent table at his house. And on state occasions, such as his own birth-day for instance, Uncle John would give us a truly princely dinner, both as to the profusion of choice dishes and wines, and as to the luxuries of linen, china and plate.

"True to his time, as an accepted bill;" said Uncle John, who was punctuality itself, rising to shake hands, "there's a jewel of a boy. One minute thirty-seven seconds to two." The neighbouring clock of Banchi struck two as he finished the words. "Never mind what that old fool jingles," added he contemptuously, "my swarthy friend there, (with a look of pride at the tortoiseshell clock,) never cheated me of a second. Marta, Marta," calling aloud to the old cook, "don't be in a hurry, you have a full minute and a half." The minute and a half was soon gone, soup was served, and we sat down to dinner.

It was the first time I had dined alone with my uncle, I had an important communication to make, and I did not know whether I was to enter upon the subject at once, or wait an inviting hint to begin. All this disturbed me, and made me a little nervous. "*Age quod agis*," said Uncle John, who perceived my embarrassment, "which means, freely translated, attend to your dinner, and think of nothing else. Business shall come with the dessert." Uncle John was talkative and full of humour, and the dinner went off capitally. In due time fruit and cheese were served, Marta was directed to bring one of the bottles of a certain shape, ranged in a certain corner of the cellar, and then dismissed. My uncle uncorked the bottle and filled two glasses, "Lachryma Christi, my boy, true Lachryma Christi. Tell me if you like it better than the Malaga of the Reverend Fathers. Here is success to your wishes!" So saying he tossed off his glass at once, and I, on my part, did the same. "Now to business," added Uncle John, smacking his lips, "I am ready to listen to you."

And he did listen in fact with due gravity to my long farrago about Fra Martino, and martyrdom, and China, and Japan, and so forth. When I entered upon the particulars of the scene which had decided my vocation, in the Church of St. Barnabas, and described the worn-out features of the young novices, I traced in my uncle's countenance symptoms of deep emotion. I was in earnest; and I spoke long and from the heart. My kind listener never attempted the least interruption, and, when I had done speaking, filled the glasses

again in silence, motioned me to drink, drank himself, and then said:

"First of all, my dear boy,—and whatever your Confessor may say to the contrary,—let me tell you at once, that a man may work his salvation very well in the world, where, believe me, there are fools and knaves enough, and trials and disappointments in sufficient plenty, to worry him to death, and make a saint of him. This premised, to satisfy my conscience, I hasten to add, that I have no objection whatever to monastic life; only I could wish you had chosen any other order than Capuchins."

"How so?" asked I eagerly.

"They are so nasty and so full of vermin," rejoined my uncle.

"Is it possible?" said I.

"It is a fact, my boy. Be it from humility, or carelessness, be it owing to their woollen dress, or to their having their clothes in common, or to their wearing no linen at all, or to all these causes combined, Capuchins are a sadly filthy set."

I felt the full force of the objection. I was a boy of naturally cleanly habits, and Capuchins from this moment sunk considerably in my estimation.

"As for me," continued Uncle John, "if I were you, that is to say, if I were young as you are, and had the calling you seem to have, I confess that, to the certainly meritorious, but somewhat monotonous existence of a Capuchin, I should vastly prefer the active life of a missionary among the

heathen, with its far distant travels, its stirring emotions by sea and land, its toils, its hardships, and incessant dangers."

"Why, uncle," replied I, "it is just such a life as you describe that I am contemplating. Did I not tell you about Fra Martino, martyrdom, and ——."

"But did you not also talk of becoming a Capuchin?"

"Yes," faltered I, "but ——."

"But Capuchins don't go on foreign missions. My dear fellow, when we mean to do a thing, we ought at least to know what we do mean. Now, is it a Capuchin, or is it a missionary you intend to become? Which of the two?"

"A missionary to be sure," answered I.

"Quite right," replied my uncle, and he began to speak about the vocation of a missionary so feelingly, that I expected every moment he would propose accompanying me to China or Japan.

"And what plan would you advise for me, uncle?" asked I when he had finished.

"The most simple one, my boy. A man cannot become qualified for an apostle in four-and-twenty hours. You must be pretty well grounded in theology to convert Mandarins, and you cannot preach to them in Italian. Theology and Chinese are then indispensable requisites. But you cannot be admitted to the study of theology until you have gone through your Class of Philosophy. So this is the course I advise: finish quietly your philosophy, and attend especially to logic, for you will have great need of it. After your philosophy, if you still persist in your ardour for martyrdom,

why, you may begin your theology here, or if you prefer setting to theology and Chinese at the same time, we may send you to Rome, where there is the College *de propaganda Fide*, established precisely for such studies. Chinese, I am told, is a tolerably complicated language, so you must not be in a hurry, my boy. Let me see; you are now not quite fifteen; if you receive martyrdom at twenty, it will not be too late, I think."

I was not quite sure whether there was not a touch of raillery in these last words. The suspicion crossed me for a moment; but, perceiving that my uncle spoke in a tone of perfect good faith, and that no muscle in his face moved, I took it for granted he was in earnest.

Another thing I am not quite sure of is, whether the two glasses of Lachryma Christi I had drunk, did not contribute, in some small degree, towards my abandoning so easily my Capuchin scheme; they had such an odd effect upon me, a worldly effect, if I dare so to speak; they coloured all things in my eyes with a rosy tint, which rendered by contrast the cell of a convent so gloomy, so desolate, so cold!

Be that as it may, my uncle's reasoning appeared to me unanswerable, so I gave up my plan of becoming a Capuchin, and centred all my mental activity on the project of foreign missions.

Never during my fit of religious fever had I departed from my system of meekness and submission towards my antagonist in the Seminary, who on his part had very soon put an end to the truce he had afforded me, and for which I had

given him credit, as I mentioned a short while back. One morning among others, a few days after my conversation with my uncle, I was talking to some of the young pupils, holding my hands behind my back, when suddenly I received on the right hand a blow with a ruler most vigorously dealt. The pain was intense, and really went to my heart. Forgetting all my resolutions of forbearance, I threw myself upon my enemy in a fit of rage, and made a snatch at his hair, when lo! an enormous wig remained in my hand, and left bare a closely shaven head. Fancy how the laugh was on my side. The fellow exasperated to fury turned upon me. At that instant I remembered Sforza. I drew my penknife, and throwing myself forward, I cried, "Come on if you dare!" He did not dare. This skirmish had a double result: it delivered me for ever from the attacks of my antagonist, and gained for him the nick-name of "Scald-head," which he never afterwards lost.

CHAPTER XV.

MY BROTHER CÆSAR STEPS IN AND TAKES THE LEAD; FREAKS AND FANCIES.

MONTHS and months slipped by, and my vocation became from day to day more problematical, till the return of my brother Cæsar gave it its death-blow. Nearly a twelvemonth spent in the country had not only recovered him from the effects of his illness, but had made him a stout robust lad.

We were very near in age, and very similar in tastes. We had both the same adventurous and romantic turn of mind, and we carried equally deep passion into all things. We soon became great friends, and really inseparable. Cæsar was a fine little fellow, rather shorter, but stronger and squarer than I was. He had, besides, another great advantage over me, (he who had left school time out of mind,) I mean a great deal of experience of the world in which he had moved so long. For instance, he knew how to play billiards, and could smoke. I never thought of contesting his superiority for a moment, and he became leader in all things. Great was his taste in dress, to my notion, and the tie of his cravat in particular excited my admiration. He did not much approve of the cut of my clothes, and found great fault with the shape of my hat. He even one evening heated an iron,

with which he contrived to flatten the brim, giving it a more becoming shape.

Cæsar had plenty of friends who lent him books, which in his turn he lent to me; but more frequently we read them together. Then we would talk over them, and identify ourselves with the characters pourtrayed, and so live in an imaginary world. Our plans for the future took their tone from our reading. Sometimes Cæsar would be a general, and Alfred and I his aide-de-camps. At other times he took a fancy for the sea, and would be captain of a noble vessel, and I the surgeon on board; but as I felt no call for operating on living arms and legs, I gave up the appointment to Alfred, and contented myself with the office of lieutenant. We were to go round the world. It was still China and Japan, with the omission of martyrdom, which I had completely renounced. Our mother was to come with us. In our day-dreams for the future our mother always had her place.

The "Adventures of a flying man," which we read with delight, inspired my brother with the bright idea of making wings for ourselves. "We shall never be able to manage it," said I to Cæsar. "You'll see," answered he with a knowing look. So we bought all the materials necessary for framing wings, such as very thin laths, pasteboard, paper of every description, pack-thread, nails, paste, etc. etc.; but when we tried to put these things to proof, the tower of Babel itself was not more hopeless. We could not get on at all; still Cæsar, who had staked his reputation on the success of the enterprise, would not give it up. Fortunately, an unforeseen

incident came to afford him a pretext for retiring from the undertaking without any great loss of honour.

We possessed some little savings between us, which with infinite pains we had changed into very small coin, all new and bright, bearing the effigy of Maria Louisa, Duchess of Parma, worth about twopence halfpenny each. We used to hide this treasure in all sorts of corners, and often changed the hiding-places—as if any one was likely to steal it! One day we took it into our heads to bury it. There was on the terrace of our house a very narrow flower-bed, in which we made a hole and put our coins into it. In the night came a pouring rain, which washed away a large portion of the mould, and the greater part of our treasure. What was our consternation in the morning—especially Cæsar's, who had discovered, in the course of that very night, that we must have a great quantity of oiled silk to make our wings! but what could be done without funds? So for want of money we were obliged to go without wings.

One day Cæsar brought home the Arabian Nights. We read them day and night. Visions of caliphs, princesses, golden palaces, subterraneous caverns, heaps of diamonds, etc. etc., floated around us, and turned our heads. We talked of nothing else. We lived so entirely in this fantastic world that we altogether lost sight of the limits that separate fiction from reality. For my part, I declare I did not in the least despair of discovering some day a trapdoor, leading to an underground place full of diamonds as big as eggs, and in which there should be a captive princess. I must have a

princess, for as to the women I saw every day, they were so far from the ideal picture I had painted for myself that I would not have lifted my little finger to obtain the most beautiful of them all. By dint of singing of Nice's and Amarillis' golden hair and coral lips, I had ended by taking the thing literally, and I stuck to it. On this point Cæsar was greatly at variance with me, and often expressed an admiration for persons of the fair sex, which I felt quite sorry not to be able to partake, or even to understand. Poor Alfred, who was entirely devoid of imagination, would stare at us, like a man in a dream, when he heard us talking of subterraneous chambers, princesses and enchanted palaces, as of so many articles of faith.

Once I positively thought I had fallen on the track of the long dreamt of subterraneous abode. In one of our walks very far out of town, we sat down under the shade of a bastion, which formed part of an old fortification. In this wall, decayed by time, there was a hole larger than the rest, choked up with stones and brambles. I forced my way through the brambles, and began to clear away the stones that filled the mouth of the opening. In so doing I put my hand upon the neck of a broken bottle, in which there was an awl. A meagre treasure indeed! But presently I discovered the neck of another bottle, and lo! there were within two magnificent oriental pearls! I instantly called to Cæsar and to Alfred. Cæsar's imagination took fire at the sight. He declared that these pearls could not be there alone; that we must make further clearance, and who could tell what

wonders might await us. So we cleared and cleared till there remained no more stones, and we came to the solid rock. Had it not been for this provoking rock, the subterraneous halls had been found that very day. We talked of blasting it with powder. As soon as we returned into the town we went to our family jeweller, to have our treasure estimated. The pearls were imitation ones, and were worth about one penny each! This estimate cooled our enthusiasm a little; nevertheless, we returned many a time to the bastion, which we explored in every direction, but, alas! without success.

One evening, when we were on the terrace enjoying the cool breeze and soft moonlight, Cæsar confided to me, under the most solemn promise of secrecy, that he sometimes went to see a friend in a certain house that I knew, opposite to which lived a young lady, according to my brother's textual expression, "beautiful as the sun." As this young lady came upon her terrace every evening to water her flowers, Cæsar had been able, from his friend's window, to contemplate and admire her at leisure. The consequence of the said contemplation and admiration had been, that he had fallen in love with the beauty in question. "If you will come with me some evening," added Cæsar, "I will take you to my friend's, and then you can see her, and tell me what you think of her." I did not much care to see her; but, as I perceived that my brother wished it very much, I agreed to go. So one evening we went, and took our stations at the window, waiting for the apparition of the goddess.

I felt, I know not why, but ill at ease, and would have given anything that she should not make her appearance. In fact, she delayed so long, that I left the window, and seated myself on a chair at the other end of the room. Almost at the same instant Cæsar whispered, "There! she has come!" I had a mind to rise, but somehow I could not. I seemed rooted to my chair; some unknown power held me fast. I made half-a-dozen excuses, each more stupid than the other, for not stirring. My brother and his friend laughed at me, and said I was afraid. "There, now she's going away!" These words restored all my courage. I went to the window, and assumed the air of being greatly provoked that she did not come back, trembling all the time lest she should. At last I retired again, saying, she would certainly not return. She came back, then went away again, and once more returned, without my being able to overcome that mysterious force which prevented me from stirring so long as she was there.

When we got home, Cæsar talked to me of nothing but his love, and in a fit of amorous enthusiasm, took his penknife, and began to tattoo his left arm with the initial of the adored name, "Emily." I asked him if he had any objection to my doing the same, and as he expressed none, I set about performing the like operation, which consisted in taking off the skin in the shape, or nearly so, of an E, and then throwing ink upon the mark to cauterize it, so as to render it indelible. From that day forward we always spoke of Emily as of our common flame, and I persuaded myself,

with the greatest ease in the world, that I was over head and ears in love; but, as for going to see her, my brother never could bring me to that. "If you like," said I one day, "we will go and give her a serenade." Cæsar played the violin a little, and I learned to accompany him on the guitar. We thought this a bright idea.

Having learned two or three airs by heart, we fixed on an evening for the execution of our project, which, however, had its difficulties. It was a strict regulation in our household that each member of it should be at home at nine o'clock, the supper hour; and in my father's eyes, absence from, or even delay in appearing at the regular meals, was a crime of *leze-famille*. After supper, our father himself bolted the house-door, from which his bedroom was not far removed; so it was no easy matter to open it without being heard. But what will not youth, fancying itself in love, achieve? By dint of oil and patience, and thanks to our eldest brother, our accomplice, who was to close the door after us, and push back the bolts, we managed to set out on our expedition. But to return before morning was quite out of the question, for we could not venture, for fear of discovery, to leave the door on the latch. So we went, and played the music we had practised under the windows of the sleeping beauty; but the said beauty slept very soundly, or was very insensible, for she gave no sign of life. We afterwards serenaded under Alfred's windows, and then walked about a long time, till we went and sat down upon a bench in the Acquasola. The night seemed endless. At last, worn out with want of sleep,

we made our way home, and sat down upon the staircase; (the street-door generally remains open during the night in Italy, and the staircase is common to all the inhabitants of the house;) and there we waited till old Caterina, our servant, should come out, early in the morning, according to her wont.

These various unpleasant circumstances did not deter us from attempting more than once the same enterprise. The second time we were not more successful than the first. The third—oh, joy!—a window opened, and a white drapery appeared. "'Tis she!" We began with wonderful spirit our best piece, and were playing most melodiously, when our ardour was suddenly cooled by a shower of water, every drop of which, as it fell upon a new hat, pierced me to the heart. So ended my first love, and truly, if ever there was a platonic passion, it was this of mine, the object of which I had never beheld. I saw her for the first time thirty years later, when the fair and slender girl of seventeen had grown into a plump, pleasant-faced lady, with grey hair, who little suspected that the bald-headed, middle-aged gentleman who then addressed her still bore on his left arm the half-effaced initial of her name!

In the midst of such like occupations slipped away the two years of philosophy. If I cast the account of what I had acquired in all this time, the balance is not very brilliant, and I have no great reason to be proud. I learned to play on the guitar, to play at billiards, to smoke, (Heaven knows at the cost of what discomfort!) and to dance. To say truth,

my first and last attempt in this very important branch of education, was far from encouraging. It was in a little dance, made up at once without preparation or ceremony in the country. There were a few young men, and several young ladies. The consciousness of my inexperience made me hold back; but one of the girls pursued me into the corner to which I had retreated, and would insist upon my dancing with her, which she soon had cause to rue; for, after a turn or two in a waltz, (*horresco referens!*) I trode upon her foot so heavily, that she almost fainted. I was so angry with myself for my awkwardness, that I swore upon the swollen foot of my luckless partner to give up dancing for ever, and I have kept my word.

In spite of my little application, the examinations which I had to undergo at the end of the two years passed off extremely well, thanks to a month's study, which Alfred and I dashed through, like an express train at full speed. Alfred, too, got off very well. After this we were obliged to separate, Alfred going to pass his holidays with his family, who resided in a little town of Piedmont. As for me, I spent them at my mother's country house, where Cæsar, who was an accomplished sportsman, initiated me into the management of a gun. I grew passionately fond of sporting, and the three months' leisure passed like lightning.

At the beginning of the scholastic year, my father returned to the alternative he had already placed before me—law or physic. I had little inclination for the profession of an advocate, but I had a great aversion to that of a physician;

so I chose the former, to the great satisfaction of my father, who, being a lawyer himself, and having made a lawyer of his eldest son, seemed to think that there could not be too many of the calling in the family. "You must go and have your name put on the books of the University," said my father, "and inquire, at the same time, the forms you must go through to be received as student." So I set about it forthwith.



CHAPTER XVI.

THE UNIVERSITY; MY WORLD OF FANCY CRUMBLES BEFORE SAD REALITIES.

As everybody knows, in the year 1821 an insurrection broke out in the Sardinian states, and the Spanish Constitution, proclaimed by the joint acclamations of the army and the people in Turin, Genoa, Alexandria, etc. etc., became the fundamental law of the state; but the triumph of constitutional liberty was short-lived. Austria intervened as usual, and her easy victory at Novara replaced matters on their former footing, that is to say, restored pure and entire despotism.

The first care of the restored government was, of course, to pursue the persons implicated in the late rebellion, as it was called, and to have them tried, sentenced, and hanged; most of them, thank God, in effigy, for almost all those who had taken any considerable part in the brief constitutional drama, had been able to effect their escape abroad. The trials and condemnations just mentioned, had passed by default, and did no injury, except to figures stuffed with straw; but far different was the fate of a small number, who, trusting either to the royal clemency, or to the slightness of their participation in the insurrection, had remained at home. They were

prosecuted and unmercifully condemned, some to death, the rest to the galleys or long imprisonment, and the sentences were carried through without remission.

It is hardly necessary to say, that the youth in the universities had been among the foremost in taking part in the revolution; and at Turin especially, it was a handful of students,—to their honour be it said, seconded by a company of soldiers, who had determined the movement in the capital. When the reverse of fortune came it had fared with the students as with the other classes of citizens, that is, those among them who had not escaped abroad, had been individually prosecuted and condemned; but this had not yet satisfied the resentment of the government. The students in general had shewn, what, in the style of the day, was called the worst spirit, so, to strike at them in a body, the Universities of Turin and Genoa were closed.

This state of things could not last for ever. There are absurdities before which a government, let it be absurd as it may, recoils. The interests of too many families were affected by the prolongation of a measure which shut every liberal profession against the rising generation. It became necessary after a time to think of doing away with this interdict. The government appointed a commission for the reform of public instruction throughout the kingdom. This was a first step towards the re-opening of the universities. It is almost superfluous to add that the choice of the members by government fell upon men after its own heart; that is to say, that those charged with the task of reforming and organizing

instruction anew, were selected from among the most bigoted, the most retrograde, the most notably hostile to all spirit of moderate progress, and the most inimical to youth. The commission set to work in the same spirit which had dictated the choice made, and completely justified the confidence of the government. With respect to the universities, these commissioners proposed to themselves a double aim; first, to have few students; secondly, to make those few as miserable as they possibly could.

To attain the former point they created two classes of students, those whose parents could prove the possession of a certain amount of landed property, and those whose parents could not. Again; they created two distinct modes of examination, one for the students of the First Class, the other for those of the Second. The ordeal appointed for the latter was purposely fraught with such a complication of difficulties, with respect both to the extent of matter comprised in the examination, and to the number of votes required to pass, as to deter the most self-confident from facing it. This amounted to neither more nor less than an ingeniously disguised mode of excluding from the liberal professions an entire class of citizens.

To attain the second object, that of rendering the students miserable, the commissioners subjected them to a host of petty, puerile, humiliating regulations and restraints, and abandoned them as a prey to the systematic ill-will of all the persons in any way connected with the universities. On this second point, the commissioners, to their credit be it said,

succeeded to their heart's content. But not so as regards their first purpose. Quite the contrary. No sooner was the re-opening of the Universities publicly announced, and the books ready to receive the names of the future students, than a whole mass of young men flocked to be matriculated. Never during the preceding years had the number of inscriptions attained to so formidable an amount. This result, which was by no means surprising, originated in two causes. First, the large arrear of youths to be educated, which had accumulated for the last few years; secondly, the determination simultaneously taken by many families in affluent circumstances, to dispose of a part of their capital hitherto employed in commerce or trade, in the purchase of land, in order to enable their sons to enter the University as students of the first class. So that all the great pains taken by the commissioners had turned out labour lost, and the only sufferers in this, as in many other cases, were, after all, the poor.

It was at the Secretary's office, in the magnificent palace of the University, *Strada Balbi*, that the names were entered. Alfred and I were not among the last who presented themselves for matriculation. We found a considerable number of youths assembled for the same purpose, and had to wait long in an antechamber. At length we were introduced into a hall, where the secretary sat in state. He was a gentleman of forty-five, rather stout, much pitted with the small-pox, and looked supercilious. He placed before us a register, in which we wrote our surnames and Christian names, and the profession to which we destined ourselves. He then shewed us

a list of the documents we must furnish before we could be admitted to follow out our studies,—so long that we were obliged to make a copy lest we should forget some of them. In the following list of certificates required from me, which I now set down from memory, I am sure I must have omitted some.

1st. Certificate of birth and baptism.

2d. Do. of my having been vaccinated, or of having had the small-pox.

3d. Do. of my having followed two years' study in Philosophy, and of having passed the examinations thereunto appertaining.

4th. Do. of good conduct from my parish priest.

5th. Do. of having attended at my parish church on all Church feast days, for the last six months.

6th. Do. of having confessed myself each month during the six preceding months.

7th. Do. of having confessed and taken the sacrament duly as required by the precept for Easter, at that solemnity last preceding.

8th. Do. that my father and mother possessed landed property of sufficient value to afford each son a portion equal to the amount, determined by the rule, to which I have already alluded.

9th, and last, a Certificate from the police, stating that I had not taken part in the constitutional movement of 1821.

The notion that I could have been implicated in a political movement when only twelve years of age, or thereabouts,

appeared to me so comical, that I laughingly made the observation. The remark was scarcely uttered when the three heads of the three clerks busily engaged in writing, were simultaneously raised, and their six eyes fixed upon me with an expression of alarmed wonder. The secretary assumed an air of offended dignity, and said, that the rules were established to be observed, not commented upon. I was startled by the tone of the remonstrance, which was that of a superior to an inferior caught in fault.

And yet, the Secretary was not a hard or a bad man,—far from it; but he was a father of a family, and naturally anxious as such to keep his situation, which was lucrative, and, to do so, he was obliged to conform to the spirit of the times, viz., to be harsh and haughty in his communications with the students. This was the general rule, as I soon found out, and all those who had anything to do with students, from the Commissioners of the Board of Instruction, down to the beadles and porters, conformed to it most strictly. One would have supposed that we were beings of an inferior order, whom every one might and ought to ill use in every way. "Students must be kept down," was the consecrated phrase that justified all kinds of indignity. And such of the professors—there were a few—as treated us with any degree of propriety, were noted in high quarters, and looked upon as giving a bad example, injurious to a system of wholesome discipline.

God knows all the trouble, the anxiety, the waste of time and patience, and alas! alas! the numerous lies, these un-

lucky certificates cost me, especially numbers five and six! Of course, the parish priest had not called over the roll of his flock, to know whether they attended divine service or not; so he took my word for it. My confessor did the same. Could I tell them, "No, I have not been to church regularly; no, I have not confessed every month," and so voluntarily shut myself out of the University? I stifled the voice of conscience, and obtained the two certificates. I received them, in truth, with a feeling of shame and confusion, as if I had stolen them; would that this emotion of remorse might plead for me!

I carried all my papers to the secretary, but I was not yet at the end of my troubles. He told me that the authorities of the University did not acknowledge the signature of ecclesiastics unless authenticated in the Archbishop's Court, (*Curia Arcivescovile.*) So to the Archbishop's Court I went, where a very ugly gentleman, looking much like a toad in silver spectacles, did the thing for me, charging me ninepence for each authentication, (I needed five.) This little tribute, levied upon hundreds of students at least four times a-year, amounted to a pretty round sum of net profit to the Archbishop's Court, and this, I verily believe, was the sole motive for the regulation. The papers thus amended were at last accepted, and the secretary appointed the next evening, at eight o'clock, for me to be at the house of Mr. Merlini, acting commissioner for the month, by whom my documents were to be finally examined. Mr. Merlini's signature could alone open the doors of the University to me.

Mr. Merlini was one of the most influential members of what was called the *Provincial Board of Public Instruction*, under the management of which the University of Genoa had been placed. The gentlemen of this Board were by turns to superintend the business for a month at a time, that is to say, to carry on the current concerns, and give the necessary signatures; but, for some reason or other, it was always Mr. Merlini's turn to be acting commissioner for the month during the many years of my attendance at the University—a circumstance which gave me the opportunity of studying his character thoroughly. Probably Mr. Merlini's colleagues had perceived his unquestionable superiority in torturing those under his direction, and consequently yielded to him those functions of which he acquitted himself so well.

I was punctual to the appointment, and accompanied by my faithful Alfred, who had gone through all the required formalities with me, and who was overjoyed that, in spite of his fears, no objection had been made to him on the score of his expulsion from the College. Eight o'clock was striking as I pulled the bell of Mr. Merlini's apartment. The door, covered with green baize, opened, turning on its hinges without the least sound, and an old servant, thin as a skeleton, showed his terrified face. "Mr. Merlini?" "Hush!" answered the skeleton in a whisper, "do not talk so loud; you have already made noise enough with the bell." I supposed that Mr. Merlini must have had an apoplectic attack, and was actually dying; but the fact only was, that Mr. Merlini was not yet up. The good man, as it seemed, liked his siesta, and always

went to bed after his dinner, not to rise again till eight o'clock, the hour of his levee. Through a door, also lined with green baize, opening as silently as the first, we were ushered into a small room thickly carpeted. Carpets, owing to the heat of the climate, being very rarely met with at Genoa, it was quite a new sensation to me, and not at all an agreeable one—to move like a shadow, without producing the slightest sound. This circumstance, the alarm manifested by the servant, the death-like stillness around—all this had a singular effect upon me. I positively grew chilly. I felt as if the *Piombi* of Venice had opened to receive me. Alfred also looked anxious and pale, and we sat down glancing at each other in silence, scarcely daring to breathe. In course of time new-comers dropped in, and I observed that no one entered without betraying in his countenance symptoms of the same nervous impression under which I was labouring. At the end of an hour, voices were heard in the next room, a door opened, my name was called, and I went in.

Mr. Merlini was seated before a large desk covered with papers, one of which he was reading attentively. The secretary, standing at his left hand, seemed to follow his eyes along the lines, and to give some occasional explanation. Mr. Merlini was an old man of seventy, he had not a tooth left, his chin was long and pointed, his nose the same; they seemed convulsively striving to meet. A small tuft consisting at most of two or three dozen of hairs, was carefully brushed up from the back part of his head, and brought to meet in a waving point on the top of his forehead. At the

very first glance one guessed them to be dyed, as appeared to be the case also with his scanty whiskers. He was dressed from head to foot in white dimity, and his shirt-collar, turned down flat like a child's, left his scraggy neck quite bare. His head was covered by a blue cap, and he wore a green shade to shield his eyes from the light. Mr. Merlini's arcadian costume, his dyed hair and whiskers, with a something altogether undefinable about his person, betrayed some pretensions still to youth.

I expected an icy reception—but no such thing. He rose precipitately at my entrance to perform a salutation, and in so doing stumbled. I put out my hand to catch him; "Do not trouble yourself, my dear sir, I am still pretty steady on my legs, thank God." These words, accompanied by an indescribable look, were rather sneered out than articulated. "And how is your father, worthy man?—one of my best friends." He had taken off his cap, and made me twenty apologies before putting it on again. "The fact is, that I am rather older than you are, my dear sir, and my hair is going, (it was already gone), ih! ih!" and again came the sneer. I knew enough by hearsay of my interlocutor to begin to tremble at so ceremonious a reception.

The examination of my papers began. I was seated opposite to Mr. Merlini, and I had remarked several times that whenever he addressed himself to me he purposely put up his hand to the front of his cap, as if to make a double screen for his eyes. Presently he explained the meaning of this by begging me, with a thousand pardons, to come and sit on his

right hand. "My sight is so weak, and you have such shining buttons to your coat, that they quite dazzle me, they do indeed," and his sneering grin came for the third time. This was a way of his own to let me feel that etiquette required a black coat for a visit to a commissioner, and I had on a blue one. Mr. Merlini had the eyes of a lynx, and the ears of a hare, but it was his whim to call himself deaf, and near-sighted. It was a sort of wit peculiar to himself. There is no accounting for taste. After all, the examination of my papers proved satisfactory, and the decisive signature was given without difficulty. The same fuss with which I had been received accompanied my leave-taking. Had I been a prince of the blood, Mr. Merlini could not have been more ceremonious. He attended me to the door, and bade me earnestly mind the stairs. Evidently the worthy gentleman was quizzing me.

I went and waited in the street for Alfred, who was introduced after me. He staid so long that I began to feel uneasy. When at last he appeared, his countenance, poor fellow, was so agitated, that before he opened his lips, I knew that my fears had been too well grounded. Mr. Merlini had really exhausted upon Alfred the exquisite talent in which he so eminently excelled for keeping any one on the rack. He had been so kind, so soft, so adorably easy. "He had already taken the pen to sign," said Alfred, relating the whole to me, "when he stopped all of a sudden and asked with an appearance of the greatest simplicity, where I had followed my studies. 'At the Royal College,' said I, of course. 'And,

no doubt,' returned Mr. Merlini, 'you went through them with honour and satisfaction to your superiors?' Not knowing what to say, I looked modestly acquiescent. 'When did you leave the college?' pursued the inquisitor. 'In the month of June,' faltered I. 'That was two months before the termination of the scholastic year,' observed my tormentor. 'For what reason did you leave before the time?' I remained silent. Here the secretary chimed in with, 'I think I remember that Mr. Alfred was expelled from college.' 'Expelled from college!' roared the Commissioner, rising, 'you were expelled from college, and you try to surprise me into giving you my signature, which you very well know I cannot give without failing in my most sacred duties!' and so he went on till he lost breath, and I took advantage of the moment to make my bow and get away."

This unexpected catastrophe went to my heart. To the consciousness that poor Alfred suffered this through me was added the fear, too soon realized, that it would be the signal for our separation. In fact, a week afterwards his father summoned him to Turin, where, by dint of powerful interest, he hoped to get him admitted to the University. Every means was tried, interest was even made with the king, but all in vain; and Alfred's father, whose great ambition for his son was the title of Doctor, at length sent him to Pisa, in Tuscany, where he was admitted without difficulty.

With a heavy step and a still heavier heart, I went the day after to the Secretary's office, at the University, to take my student's card, which was called the *Admittatur*, and

cost half a crown. The Admittatur was good for three months only. "At the end of that time," said the secretary, "you must bring me back this, signed by all your professors, along with a certificate from your confessor, and one from the rector of your parish, attesting that you have assiduously fulfilled your religious duties, and then we shall see whether we can give you another."

I have already said, that, contrary to the expectation of the reformers of public instruction, the number of names matriculated had never been so large as this year; a circumstance which led these great men to make some profound reflections, and to come to the conclusion, that to bring together in one single building some hundreds of young men, was neither more nor less than to put the state within a hair's breadth of ruin. To avoid so alarming a contingency the following was their wise contrivance:—The lectures were not to be delivered within the walls of the University, but at the respective houses of the professors. In this way formidable meetings would be avoided; and so the University, opened *de jure*, was still *de facto* closed.

This arrangement caused us students much inconvenience. First, it obliged us to trot about from one professor's house to another, often separated by long distances; besides, none of these gentlemen had apartments sufficiently spacious to admit with comfort a hundred or more students at a time, so that we were stowed together like negroes in a slave-ship, and the greater number obliged to stand. This method became intolerable in the warm season. I remember there was one

professor so much straitened for room that the majority of his audience was obliged to remain on the staircase.

It was strictly required of the professors that they should call over the roll of their auditors at the beginning of the lecture, and mark down those who might be absent. After three absences thus proved, the professor was forbidden to give his signature to the student's card, which occasioned a loss of three months. Nothing so provoking was ever invented—nothing giving rise to so many acts of servility on the one side and of gross partiality on the other, as this confounded system of calling over the names. It was a sword of Damocles, continually suspended over our heads, and really put us at the mercy of our professors; for where was the student sure of not being three times in three months a minute after the hour, and who might not want a little indulgence on this score? For the youth of independent character, who was above condescending to entreaty, the fatal cross was scarcely ever effaced, whereas it readily disappeared for one who could bow low, and make himself acceptable by fawning.

The letter was everything, the spirit nothing. The student who showed himself assiduously at the lecture, especially if very submissive, even although he never looked at his books, stopped short at the most simple question, and conducted himself in other respects no matter how, fulfilled the letter of the law, and that was sufficient—he was irreproachable. On the contrary, a conscientious young fellow who was above cringing, let him be ever so studious, ever so unimpeachable in his

morals, was unmercifully pounced upon at the least infraction of the letter of the law. The aim was to form machines not men. The University was like a huge press destined to squeeze out of the rising generation all independence of spirit, all dignity, all self-respect; and when I pass in review the noble characters which, nevertheless, have escaped from this bed of Procrustes, I cannot help thinking with pride what strong moral elements our much-slighted Italian nature must possess, to come forth pure and vigorous from such a deleterious atmosphere.

A kind professor, who might sympathize with us—and there were some such—dared not give way to his good-will so much as he might have wished, for he knew that he was watched as well as we, and that an unfavourable report might cost him his chair. The professors and the students were equally subjected to the espionage of the servants of the University, such as porters, beadles, janitors, watchmen, etc. etc., who were all informers,—informing being a condition, *sine qua non*, of their obtaining and keeping their places. These wretches did their best to overhear our conversations, which they reported after their own fashion, sending up notes concerning various individuals. They felt their power, and used it like uneducated *creatures* as they were, that is, by conducting themselves with rudeness and insolence. And the student who might be tempted to make one of these men know his place, entered upon a perilous undertaking, for between the affirmation of a student and that of a servant, the latter was sure to obtain credence.

Nothing more painful than my first steps in this little world of low feeling, mean annoyances, deception, and oppression. Nothing so discouraging as my gradual initiation into a state of things against which my whole nature revolted. There was a complete end to enchanted palaces, princesses and romantic adventures! My fictitious world crumbled piecemeal, as sad realities forced themselves upon me. Dull indeed and dreary was this first period of my University education. I was miserable, and felt so lonely! Alfred was gone, and as for Cæsar, poor fellow, I hardly saw him even at meals.

Intended for a notary, Cæsar was placed for a short time with a member of that profession who was in extensive practice,—a hard and selfish man, who led him a sore life, overloading him with work, and treating him with cruel harshness. Very often the entire day would not suffice for the task imposed upon Cæsar, and he was condemned to encroach on his sleep, and spend a great part of the night in copying law papers. So he also was very wretched, and our only consolation was to relate to each other our sorrows, lament our destinies, and curse our oppressors. Poor Cæsar's excitement, when upon this topic, often verged upon delirium. From the fear of oversleeping, and of reaching his office too late, it frequently happened that he would rise in the dead of night, and return no more to bed.

One of the things that preyed most on my mind, was the obligation under which I lay of confessing myself every month, and, indeed, on a fixed day. Now, at times I did not feel in a frame of mind to do so, and my conscience

was startled at the idea of approaching lightly the confessional, for which I had been brought up to entertain the deepest reverence. Fortunately, I met with a worthy ecclesiastic, who calmed my scruples. He was an old priest, who held to the Jansenists' doctrine. He often came to see my mother, and his conversation, devoid of prejudice, had made a favourable impression on me. I chose him as my confessor, and opened my mind to him. The good man completely reassured my conscience. "Confess," said he, "only when you feel yourself in the fitting disposition to do so; when you are not in a proper mood come to me, we will have a little conversation, which will be much better than a confession unworthily gone through, and you shall have from me all the certificates you want." This arrangement relieved my mind from an immense weight.

About the same time, coming home one evening earlier than usual, I found my mother in tears. She refused to tell me the cause, but it came upon me as a sudden revelation that she was far from happy, and I guessed who was at the bottom of it. This discovery added much to my load of misery. I loved my mother so tenderly that I could not bear to see her unhappy.

It was in this state of mind that I became acquainted with a fellow-student, whom I had long wished to know. This acquaintance soon ripened into a friendship equally intimate and enthusiastic on both sides, which was a happy relief to my sufferings, and shed an inexpressibly sweet balm into the wounds of my soul.

CHAPTER XVII.

HOW I GOT ACQUAINTED WITH FANTASIO, AND BOTH OF US WITH THE DIRECTOR OF THE POLICE; SUDDEN CRISIS IN CÆSAR'S AFFAIRS, AND HIS ILLNESS.

THE following was the occasion which introduced me to Fantasio, the name I shall give to my new friend.

I was one of about a dozen young men (Fantasio was not of the number) who went one warm evening to enjoy the cool breeze at the *Acquasola*. Some new embellishments had just been made in that public walk; new flower beds and grass plots had been laid out, and surrounded by wooden trellis-work to prevent trespass. We happened to be near this spot, some of us seated upon a bench, some on the ground. It chanced that one of my companions, induced by the heat, took off his coat, and hung it on the trellis. We were chatting merrily, when the sergeant from the guard-house of the Acquasola happening to pass, gave orders in a more than brutal tone, that the coat should be taken away. It might be a question whether the act thus challenged constituted an infraction of the rules, but it was out of all question that the tone in which the intimation was given, was, to say the least of it, highly improper. The owner of the coat nevertheless obeyed, observing at the same

time to the sergeant, that he might have been more civil. A provoking retort from the soldier ensued. In short, an altercation began, but after a few minutes the man of arms went away, and there was an end of the matter,—so at least we thought. But we were mistaken. A quarter of an hour had scarcely elapsed, when back came the sergeant, vociferating with furious gestures, "Do you think to frighten me because you are students?". The man was evidently excited by drink. "Let us alone, do!" said the young man who owned the coat, and close to whom the sergeant had placed himself. The words were no sooner pronounced than the soldier, without further warning, drew his sabre, and pointed it against the youth's breast. At sight of this we all rose like lightning, and threw ourselves upon the frantic man, not to do him any hurt, but to prevent further mischief. The sabre, turned aside in time by the young man, had merely scratched the skin. All this, of course, had not passed without some loud words, and the passers by, attracted by the noise, came round us, and soon formed a compact group.

The soldier returned his sabre to the scabbard, and began his retreat towards the guard-house, roaring out with stentorian lungs, that "*we wanted to make a revolution—that was the thing.*" To turn a case of lawful self-defence into a political attempt, the sergeant felt instinctively, was a sure way of throwing odium on us, and securing impunity for himself. We followed him, in a state of great excitement, to the guard-house, with the intention of carrying a com-

plaint to the officer on duty, but there was no officer, the sergeant himself being chief of the guard. So we retired, giving him to understand repeatedly, that he should hear of us again.

The next day we met in council, and it was decided that we should carry a complaint to the governor of the town, and demand the punishment of the sergeant. There being a law which forbade the military, under severe penalties, to draw their swords, we, in our simplicity, made no doubt of obtaining redress. But was it prudent to present ourselves ten or twelve together, and would it not be better to choose a deputation, which should declare the subject of our complaint? Opinions were divided on that point, and some one proposed to go and consult on the matter with Fantasio, who lived close by. No sooner said than done. Fantasio received us most cordially, shared our indignation, declared himself in favour of the deputation, and offered to make part of it, an offer which was accepted with great satisfaction. I was named second deputy; the third was the young man who had been so near bearing serious marks of the sergeant's brutality. We went to the governor's palace four times in the course of the day, without obtaining admittance. A sort of secretary, who at last asked us what was the object of our visit, and to whom we explained the whole without hesitation, observed that our business concerned his Excellency less than the military commandant of the town. This was another military authority, having more especially under his orders the troops of the garrison. This officer, a sort of gross,

brutal trooper, received us standing, and during the five minutes of audience he vouchsafed us, repeated over and over again, "that the military were to be respected; that if we fancied we were masters of the town, we were devilishly mistaken." It was in vain for us to say that we were quite of his opinion on that point, but that it was not the one in question. He would not listen to us, turned on his heel, and walked off.

The following day, early in the morning, a letter was brought to my address, containing a summons from the director of police to present myself at his office at twelve o'clock. I hastened immediately to Fantasio with this piece of intelligence, and found that he had received a similar notification; so had he who had been the third in the deputation. We were exact to the time. After having been kept waiting long in the antechamber, we were introduced to the presence of the director, who began by telling us "that we might thank his moderation first, and secondly, the respectability of the families to which we belonged, that he had had us summoned before him, instead of sending us straight to prison." After this exordium, he went on to say "that the authorities had something else to do than to listen to complaints of imaginary wrongs; that it was time, high time, to have done with such nonsense; that students had better keep quiet; that now he had once for all warned us, we might go about our business." With this he motioned us to the door. "But——" began Fantasio. "Hush!" interrupted the magistrate, "not another word, or"—taking hold of a hand-

bell on the table—"I send you instantly to the Tower"—the state prison.

Such was the redress we obtained. Four-and-twenty years later, when things had fortunately changed for the better in Piedmont, one of my friends, employed at the police, communicated to me a secret note entered upon their official books, and bearing the date of the day on which I had thus appeared before the director. The note runs thus:—"Lorenzo Benoni, hot-headed, talented, romantic, *reserved*," (the word was underlined,) "to be looked after." I suppose that my two colleagues each got a little memorandum of the same kind for their share.

This affair gave rise to the first stormy scene that had as yet passed between my father and me. It was a few hours after my interview with the director of the police, and naturally I was in no very cheerful mood, when my father, who already knew all about it, (somehow or other he always knew what I did,) asked me of a sudden whether I had done making myself the town-talk? I was startled, and begged him to explain how he meant that I had made myself the town-talk? Why, by playing the part of Don Quixote, said my father; what business had I to stand forward in a matter which did not personally concern me? I answered, that in bearing witness for a wronged and ill-used companion, I had acted according to the precept, "Do unto others as ye would be done unto," and that I did not think I was to blame for it. All that was very fine, retorted my father; but the end of it was, that the stain of having appeared at the police remained

with me, a circumstance very little calculated to enhance a young man's reputation—was I aware of that? To this I observed, that if the police was a disreputable thing, so much the worse for those who made it so; that as for me, I could not reasonably be made responsible for a step taken on compulsion, and sorely against my will. New replies gave rise to new rejoinders, till at last my father ordered me peremptorily to hold my tongue. My blood was up, and I could not help muttering, that the argument was a convenient one, but that I had thought it reserved for the special use of directors of police. Upon this my father rose in a passion, and advanced towards me. I thought at the time that it was with the intention of striking me, but of this I am not sure; certainly, his aspect was menacing. My mother started up at the same instant, and threw herself between us, desiring me to leave the room, which I immediately did.

The discomfiture we had received in common, created between Fantasio and myself a communion of feeling, which contributed to the rapid growth of our intimacy. What our feelings were towards the commandant of the town and the director of the police, in particular, as well as towards the Government in general, I leave it to the reader to guess. It is, however, certain, that within a month after this circumstance, which had brought Fantasio and me together, we had sworn a mutual friendship in life and death, and, somehow or other, an intimacy had sprung up between the two families. Every morning, without fail, I went to Fantasio's house, and every evening, in like manner, Fantasio came to

ours. My mother and my brothers, especially Cæsar, were captivated with him. He was certainly the most fascinating little fellow I ever knew.

Fantasio was my elder by one year. He had a finely-shaped head, the forehead spacious and prominent, and eyes black as jet, at times darting lightning. His complexion was a pale olive, and his features, remarkably striking altogether, were set, so to speak, in a profusion of flowing black hair, which he wore rather long. The expression of his countenance, grave and almost severe, was softened by a smile of great sweetness, mingled with a certain shrewdness, betraying a rich comic vein. He spoke well and fluently, and when he warmed upon a subject, there was a fascinating power in his eyes, his gestures, his voice, his whole bearing, that was quite irresistible. His life was one of retirement and study; the amusements common with young men of his age had no attraction for him. His library, his cigar, his coffee; some occasional walks, rarely in the day time, and always in solitary places, more frequently in the evening and by moonlight; —such were his only pleasures. His morals were irreproachable, his conversation was always chaste. If any of the young companions he gathered round him occasionally indulged in some wanton jest, or expression of double meaning, Fantasio—God bless him!—would put an immediate stop to it by some one word, which never failed of its effect. Such was the influence that the purity of his life, and his incontestable superiority, gave to him.

Fantasio was well versed in history, and in the literature,

not only of his own but of foreign countries. Shakspeare, Byron, Goethe, Schiller, were as familiar to him as Dante and Alfieri. Spare and thin in body, he had an indefatigably active mind; he wrote much and well both in prose and verse, and there was hardly a subject he had not attempted, —historical essays, literary criticisms, tragedies, etc. etc. A passionate lover of liberty under every shape, there breathed in his fiery soul an indomitable spirit of revolt against tyranny and oppression of every sort. Kind, feeling, generous, never did he refuse advice or service, and his library, amply furnished, as well as his well-filled purse, were always at the command of his friends. Perhaps he was rather fond of displaying the brilliancy of his dialectic powers at the expense of good sense, by maintaining occasionally strange paradoxes. Perhaps there was a slight touch of affectation in his invariably black dress; and his horror of apparent shirt-collars was certainly somewhat exaggerated; but, take him all in all, he was a noble lad.

To him I owe having really read and enjoyed Dante. Many a time, before having made acquaintance with Fantasio, I had taken up the *Divina Commedia* with the firm determination of going through the whole of it; but soon recoiling from its difficulties I had given up the task, and contented myself with reading those portions of the great poem which are most famous, and the beauties of which are most popular. In a word, I had only sought amusement in Dante. Fantasio taught me to look there for instruction and the ennobling of my faculties. I drank deeply at this

source of profound thought and generous emotion, and from that time the name of Italy, which recurs so often in the book, became sacred to me, and made my very heart beat. We read together the most obscure passages. Fantasio's commentaries were rather brilliant than deep, but I was of an age when brilliancy is irresistibly seductive, and makes up for everything else.

At that time the war between the classic and romantic schools was at its height; ink flowed in torrents. Unable to find vent on the forbidden ground of politics, passions ran counter in the lists of literature. The classics were the Conservatives in letters, the champions of authority, swearing by Aristotle and Horace, out of whose Church there was no salvation to be found. The imitation of the ancients was their creed. The romantic school was that of the Liberals in literature, the enemies of authority. They would not hear of Aristotle and his unities. According to them genius knew no lawgiver but itself, imitation was mere impotence, nature was the sole and eternal spring of the living and the beautiful. From literature the impulse of innovating reform had spread to art. Rossini in music, Hayes and Migliara in painting, had opened new paths. Manzoni, the avowed chief of the romantic school in literature, had just published his *Promessi Sposi*. The periodicals belonging to each party threw themselves on this book with a sort of fury, some praising it to the skies, others vehemently decrying it. According to the former Manzoni was a demi-god, if you gave ear to the latter he was scarcely a man.

There could be no doubt as to Fantasio's choice in this matter. He espoused the cause of the romantic school with all the ardour and devotedness belonging to his nature. He published in a Florentine periodical, attached to the romantic party, a series of articles full of spirit, in which he laid down the most revolutionary theories with respect to art. We gave him our enthusiastic applause, and, following the example of our young leader, became violent Shakspearians, Manzonians, Rossinists, Migliarists. Fantasio, with his characteristic feverish activity, immediately conceived the plan of a literary paper, of which he was to be the conductor and I one of the contributors. But some difficulty, which I do not well remember, came across the project, the realization of which was deferred.

At the end of this first year of my legal studies, things came to a sudden crisis in the affairs of my brother Cæsar. One evening, after having been overworked all day, he was preparing to return home, when his employer gave him some papers, a copy of which was wanted, he said, in a great hurry, and must be done in the course of that night. Cæsar was unwell, and declined this extra work on the plea of feeling ill. His employer insisted upon the point, imputing the refusal to idleness. Cæsar, commanding himself with difficulty, answered that he thought he fulfilled his duty, by giving his days, and that night was allotted for sleep. At these words the notary flew into a towering passion, and called my brother an idle starveling. Cæsar, exasperated, said, " If ever I put my foot again into your office I give

you leave to call me idler and starveling, and to kick me out of it besides," and so saying he put on his hat and went away.

The next day during dinner, the more than usually frowning aspect of my father, shewed us that he knew all. And true enough, he presently broached the subject, and notified to Cæsar as his ultimatum, that the next day he must make an apology to his employer. My brother repelled the proposition with the greatest indignation, "Make excuses to that brute! and for what? for having insulted me! Never, never! I would rather be made minced meat of."

"You will do what I order, or you shall leave my house within four and twenty hours," thundered my father.

"This instant, if you please; but I will not do a mean and vile thing." A terrible scene followed. My father was beside himself, Cæsar was exasperated beyond measure. We were obliged to carry him off, almost by force. In the evening he complained of shiverings, and went early to bed. I remarked that there was an unusual red spot on his cheek, and that his eyes were more than commonly bright and dilated. "If I could only weep, what a relief it would be," said he to me several times.

My father came home at the accustomed hour, and supper was served. "Where is Cæsar that I do not see him in his place?" asked he of my mother. "Cæsar is gone to bed with fever," was my mother's answer. "This is a strangely convenient fever," returned my father bitterly; "if you have got this up for stage effect, I can tell you it won't do with me. I shall not be the dupe of it." My mother breathed

not a word, but she gave him a look, such a look as I shall never forget to the last day of my life. My father could not stand it; he quailed, and turned his eyes to the floor. Supper passed in total silence, and my father retired to his own room immediately thereafter.

When we returned to Cæsar we found him delirious. "I shall never be able to get through this copy to-night," cried he as soon as he saw me come in, "my head can't stand it. Do go, and let Mr. Marco know I can't." Imagine my mother's alarm. I went out, indeed, as poor Cæsar urged, but it was to fetch the family physician, whom I brought back with me. He ordered copious bleeding, and the application of four and twenty leeches, if, two hours after the bleeding, the delirium did not give way. So we had to send for a surgeon, who opened a vein, and, the delirium still continuing, leeches were applied during the night. The symptoms were aggravated rather than diminished when the physician returned early the next morning. He desired a consultation, which took place, and it was decided that the bleeding should be continued. Cæsar was then immediately bled for the third time, and again in the afternoon. The patient after that had a respite of some hours. My brother's illness was a brain fever.

During five days and five nights Cæsar's life hung by a thread. With the exception of a few rare intervals, his state was one of constant delirium. He was pursued by one fixed idea: a task quite impossible to be achieved, and the rage of his employer because it was not completed. I had laid a

mattress on the ground at the foot of his bed, and I stretched myself on it from time to time, when my limbs refused to support me. I had never witnessed serious illness before, and the gloomy phantasmagoria of a sick-room, with those closed curtains, that shaded light, those whispered questions, that terrifying immobility, those sudden movements still more alarming, was a terrible novelty to me. He who has never watched by the bed of a beloved one in danger knows not what suffering is.

I had passed through all the alternations of hope and terror, when, on the morning of the sixth day, the physician, after his usual visit, shook his head, and advised that the sacraments should be administered. This was a sentence of death. Die! he, my Cæsar, my brother and beloved companion, he, so full of life a week ago! It was surely impossible, it could not be God's will! What would become of me without Cæsar! I thought I had exhausted the full bitterness of grief, and the agony was just beginning, an agony unlike any before experienced. What! Cæsar was to die, and the sky was blue as ever, the sun shone bright, the birds were chirping merrily on the house-top, all nature was bedecked and joyous! This could not be.

Two long rows of people with lighted tapers filled the room, and knelt down, singing psalms. The priest in his pontifical vestments, approached the bed and administered the sacred wafer; every one then retired in silence, the room remained empty, and nothing was to be heard but the ticking of the clock. Was this a reality or a vision? My heart was

bursting; something within me seemed to break. Praise be to God, He granted me the relief of tears! I rushed into an adjoining room, hid my head among the cushions of the sofa, and wept like a wretched creature as I was.

Cæsar passed the whole of that day in complete immobility; he might have been supposed a corpse. His breathing was imperceptible, and hardly tarnished the mirror which we placed several times before his lips. Late in the evening, in a whisper almost inaudible, he asked "to drink." These two words revived all our hopes. We sent instantly for the doctor, who examined the patient, and pronounced that there was a slight amelioration. "Nature is a great physician," added the old practitioner, "if this improvement continues through the night, he is saved." My mother, in a transport of gratitude, threw herself at the old man's feet, and bathed his hands with her tears. At that moment I regretted that I had not chosen the profession of medicine.

In fact, the night passed calmly, and in the morning the delirium had entirely vanished, but the exhaustion of the patient was so great that he could neither speak nor move for two whole days. His convalescence was tedious, but without any relapse. In one month from the day he took to bed, Cæsar rose from it for the first time, and, leaning on my mother's arm, could take a few steps in the room. As soon as he could bear the motion of a sedan chair my mother conveyed him to the country, where I joined them at the end of the scholastic year, and to my great consolation, found my brother almost entirely recovered.

My father must have bitterly regretted the harsh words he had uttered on the first evening of Cæsar's illness, and which had wounded my mother to the heart. He came several times and sat down by Cæsar's bed-side, without speaking; but having perceived the painful impression produced upon the patient by his presence, he confined himself to coming to the door, and making inquiries from time to time. As to the disagreement between Cæsar and his employer he observed absolute silence, and neither uttered a word nor made any allusion to the subject, but at the end of the holidays he asked Cæsar what he intended to do. He answered, that he wished to study medicine, which was agreed to. So he matriculated, gave the required certificates, and was admitted without difficulty. As to me, I easily obtained the renewal of my ticket of admission, and on the first day of term Cæsar and I walked together arm in arm to the University.

CHAPTER XVIII.

UNEXPECTED VISITATION, AND AWKWARD DILEMMA; MY FATHER IS VERY ANGRY AND BIDS ME BESTIR MYSELF.

THIS year the University was really and truly opened. The professors, for whom the lectures given at their own houses had very serious inconveniences, had warmly remonstrated upon the subject with the Provincial Board of Public Instruction, and the said Provincial Board had presented a report to their superiors the High Commissioners for the Reform of Public Instruction at Turin, who, after profound reflection, had made up their minds to introduce the wished for change, and to take the chance of the possible dangers which might accrue to the kingdom from the agglomeration of several hundreds of students, for some hours each day, in the same building. From this time therefore the lectures were delivered at the University.

This novelty, with which we were very well pleased, brought about another much less to our satisfaction, the re-establishment of what was called the *Congregazione*, that is, the meeting of the students to hear mass and pray in common on Sundays and all Church holidays. The attendance at divine service was obligatory. With the Congregazione was re-established the office of Prefetto of the Congregazione,—a

priest of course,—one of whose special duties was to ascertain the presence of the students. The following was the mode devised for this purpose.

Several wooden frames were hung against the wall. Each faculty,—law, medicine, theology, etc., etc., had one or more frames, in which were inserted long rows of moveable pegs, upon which were inscribed the names of the students, one upon the head of each peg. Each student as he entered the Congregazione declared to which faculty he belonged, and gave his name, while the Prefetto, or an attendant, drew out the slip that bore it. The position of this wooden peg, drawn out or left in its place, served to prove the presence or the absence of the student. The signature of the Prefetto of the Congregazione was necessary to the renewal of the Admittatur, and if absence could be proved against you twice in the three months, you lost your right to it. This was a new tether fastened to our legs.

Truly prayer is a good thing, and prayer in common is a solemn duty, but as all times and all frames of mind are not equally fit for it, this more than any other thing should be left to the free will of each individual. At all events, I confess I do not understand prayer upon compulsion. Whether right or wrong, this at least was the opinion of most of the students, who received the new measure with the worst possible grace. There occurred even at first some slight disorders expressive of the general dissatisfaction. Sometimes the whole congregation seemed simultaneously struck dumb, and no one made responses; at others they would burst out

with a sort of fury, shaking the windows like a roar of cannon. Sometimes during the sermon a universal fit of coughing, or an irresistible general sneezing came to drown the preacher's voice. In truth, the service was endless, and took place twice in the day, morning and evening. As Sunday was the only holiday in the week we regretted sadly the loss of our liberty. It was hard enough in the bad season; but when the fine weather returned, when the country shewed itself in all its attractions, to be forced to give up spending the day out of town, according to general custom, rendered the tie that bound us within its walls doubly odious. It was still worse during the season of the greatest heat, and longest days. Then, indeed, the Congregazione, especially after dinner, became intolerable. We had to trot off to the University after a hasty meal, at three o'clock in the afternoon, the very hottest hour of the day, and at five o'clock we came out into the street, with four hours of daylight before us. What in the world to do with ourselves we did not know. To take a walk for pleasure was quite out of the question, and to get home was no slight enterprise, for the University was out of the way, far from the centre of the town, where the immense majority of the students lived. There was nothing to be done but to go into a *Caffé*, and wait for evening.

As for myself and my brother Cæsar, this inconvenience, which I think it as well to mention, did not exist in our case. The Congregazione was no sooner over than we invariably went together with Fantasio to his house, and there spent the

hottest hours of the afternoon. Fantasio lived near the Piazza of the *Acquaverde*, at a little distance from the Palace of the University, in a house situated on an eminence, which commanded an extensive view over the town, and the sea beyond. Fantasio's little apartments comprehended a room with an alcove, and a small drawing-room with a balcony, on which we used to sit, when the sun had left it, and court the breeze, and smoke our cigars.

Two good thirds of this my second year of University studies passed smoothly enough. The only little difficulty I encountered was with the Prefetto of the Congregazione. It is a circumstance so trifling in itself that I have hesitated to mention it; but as it forms a part of a system, and is highly illustrative of the way in which our superiors treated us, I think I may as well relate it. I went one day to this Prefetto to have my card of admittance signed. The Prefetto lived in the Palace of the University, at the very top of the building, and to get to his rooms one had to climb a hundred steps at least. He came himself to open the door, with his breviary in his hand. "What do you want?"—"I beg your pardon, will you be so good as to sign my card?"—"I cannot just now, I am repeating my breviary." Now, to repeat the breviary, as anybody knows, is an occupation which a priest makes no scruple of interrupting fifty times running. Of this I was well aware by my own experience, many being the lectures and the slaps I had received from my uncle the Canon between one verse of his breviary and another. "It will only take a moment," urged I. "I tell you I can't."

I still pressed the matter. The Prefetto, who was an irritable splenetic man, got angry and said, "You shall have my signature neither now nor afterwards." He kept his word. Remonstrances and prayers were all in vain, and had it not been for my confessor, who interfered in my favour, and at last obtained the indispensable signature, I should be without it at this hour.

This slight annoyance excepted, things were going smoothly enough with me, as I said, when one morning—it was the first Tuesday in June, I remember it as if it were yesterday—very early, while I was still in bed, I was awakened by a loud knocking at my door. There was a person, said old Caterina, asking for me, and who was waiting below with a letter. I desired the maid to go and bring up the letter, but the person said he had been ordered to deliver the paper into my own hands. I threw on my clothes, and hurried to see who it was. It turned out to be the under-porter of the University, a very young man, who seemed civil. He begged me to excuse the trouble he gave me, alleging the very strict injunctions he had received, and handed me a letter. "What is it?" said I. "I know nothing about it," answered the messenger, "all that I can tell you is, that I have four other letters to deliver, and all in person," and saying this he went away.

I looked at the outside of the letter; it was very large and very dirty, and bore the seal of the University. There were in one corner these words, "to be delivered in person," and I could distinguish through the paper the words "Secretary's

Office," in printed letters. My heart misgave me. The following were the contents of the letter:—

"*Secretary's Office of the Royal University of Genoa.*

"SIR,—The High Provincial Board of Public Instruction, in its sitting of date the ——, (the day before,) has decreed that you shall be excluded from the lectures of the Royal University for the term of one entire scholastic year, that is to say, for nine months.

"That you may not remain in ignorance thereof, and according to the orders I have received, I have the honour to acquaint you with the same, by these presents, which will be delivered into your own hands.

"THE SECRETARY OF THE ROYAL
UNIVERSITY OF GENOA.

"Illustrissimo Padrone Colendissimo
Signor Lorenzo Benoni, Law-student."

A *Nota Bene* explained at full length that the three months of vacation (then just approaching) were not counted in the nine months of exclusion to which I was condemned, and that the time would not end till the first Monday of June in the following year.

I was perfectly thunder-struck. What vile trick could this be? A year lost, and for what? I rubbed my eyes, hoping to awake from an evil dream. I examined anew the address on the letter, to assure myself that there was no mistake. It bore exactly my name and christian name, the name of the street, and the number of the house I lived in. What crime, then, could I have unconsciously committed? I had to be

sure, a recent slight peccadillo on my conscience, which I will presently explain, but which, suppose it were known, could only have brought upon me a passing lecture, to say the most. I ran to the Secretary's office. I will at least know why I am punished. Perhaps there is some mistake, which I can explain away, perhaps I may exculpate myself entirely. At the bottom of my heart I knew that this could not be. By too long experience I was aware, that an injustice, even when acknowledged, was never repaired. But such is human nature, that to help ourselves to bear a misfortune we feel an instinctive necessity of indulging in false hopes. It was early, and the secretary was not yet at his post. I waited for him in the street to be sure of not missing him. At last he appeared and I went up to him, and with assumed calmness, belied by the trembling of my voice, begged to know what was the fault for which I was punished by the loss of a whole year. "No one could know better than myself," answered the secretary bluntly, and passed on; but I was too earnest to let him escape thus, so I followed at his heels. "I take my oath that I have no more idea what my fault may be than the babe unborn. Surely if I am punished I may at least be told for what offence. The greatest criminal in the world has a right to know why he is hanged. The motives of my condemnation are no doubt registered in the minutes of the sitting of the Board, dated the day before yesterday. These minutes I demand to see, and you cannot refuse my request."

"This was a thing quite impossible; the sittings of the

Board were secret; to communicate the minutes would be a gross dereliction of duty." With reasons of this description, the secretary shut the door of his office, to which I had followed him, in my face.

I was rushing down the steps of the University, in a state of excitement not easy to imagine, when I met a fellow-student. "What is the matter with you?" said he, "you seem quite upset."

"And well I may be. The matter is, that I am excluded from the University for a year, and I do not know why."

"It might have fared still worse with you," returned he, and he named two of our companions expelled altogether, and some others excluded like myself for a year. "It is last Sunday's affair, you know." At these words the veil fell from my eyes.

Some considerable disturbance had occurred at the Congregazione of the preceding Sunday, and I was the victim of a false accusation; or else, not having been able to find out the real culprits, they had dealt their blows at random. There remained no doubt I was a scape-goat.

Divine service at the University Chapel had been interrupted, on the preceding Sunday, by a singular incident. In the very middle of mass, such an insupportable stench had spread around the chief altar and the choir, that the officiating priest had been obliged to interrupt the service, and take refuge in the vestry. Upon inspection, there was found behind the main altar a quantity of *gaggia* seeds, which had been masticated, and scattered in several places. *Gaggia* is

the name given to a shrub of the acacia species, (*mimosa Farnesiana,*) which bears a little downy ball-like yellow flower, powerfully fragrant. Its seed, if masticated and left in an inclosed place, after a time gives forth a most nauseous smell, and becomes pestiferous.

The scandal caused by this occurrence was sufficiently serious to induce Mr. Merlini, who, as usual, was acting commissioner for the month, to convoke the whole Board, a thing which hardly ever happened. Upon what sort of information they had proceeded to pronounce various penalties upon several students, I do not pretend to say; all I know is, that, with respect to me, they fell into a complete mistake, for on the fatal Sunday *I had not attended the congregation.*

The minute precautions I have already detailed, the aim of which was to prove the presence or the absence of each student, had not obviated fraud. "*Fatta la legge, trovata la malizia,*" (the law is no sooner made than the infraction of it ensues,) says a sad Italian proverb, which only means, that my unfortunate country has possessed more bad than good laws; for this is the greatest evil of vexatious restrictive laws, that they sharpen everybody's wits to elude them—an exercise of ingenuity little calculated to enhance good morals. In the beginning it was the Prefetto, or one of his assistants, who used to draw out the slide containing the student's name, which certified his presence; but by degrees discipline had relaxed on this point, and it became customary for the student, under the eye of the Prefetto or

assistant, to draw out the wooden peg himself. This greater laxity gave rise to the following abuse:—Two students, whose names were together on the list, would agree beforehand that only one should go to the congregation, and dexterously draw out two pegs, his own and the one of his absent friend. This was a little service which we occasionally rendered to each other by turns. Now, it happened that on that fatal Sunday, when the scandal I have mentioned occurred, I had made an agreement with my neighbour on the list, that he should draw out my slip for me, and consequently I had not been to the congregation.

Then, you could easily prove the *alibi*, you will say. Not so fast, reader. First of all, I do not exactly know how pleading an *alibi* could have availed, in presence of the overwhelming evidence of the peg. But, supposing it might, would not the argument have put the University authorities on the trace of the scheme, which was useful to so many? I very much doubt, then, that I should have had recourse to this proof, even had my *alibi* been as innocent as a babe unborn; but mine, alas! was a shameful *alibi*, one that shunned the face of day. For, since I must confess the truth, that whole Sunday morning I had passed in giving a lesson of modesty at billiards to one of my fellow-students, who had boasted that he was quite willing at any time to give me two points out of sixteen—a lesson which cost me dear enough, since, to say nothing of the loss of a whole year, and all the consequent family vexations, it entailed upon me the galling mortification of having to put up with a flagrant injustice,

without the comfort of proving to those who had inflicted it, their odious absurdity.

Vainly did I think, and think, and think; I could devise no means of getting out of this scrape. There was nothing to be done but to sit down and patiently await the end of the year. Would to God I could have acted according to my judgment! How many humiliations I should have spared myself! But it was otherwise decreed.

Fantasio, on whom I called for a few minutes, and to whom I related my mischance, with all the complicating circumstances, judged of the situation exactly as I did. "It is a dilemma without an issue," said Fantasio. "You cannot call as witnesses a coffee-house keeper, and two or three of your companions supposed at the time to have been at the congregation. That would be absurd, and of no avail. Bear it like a man; that is all you can do."

It was now near dinner time, and I must go home. The thought, "How shall I manage with my father?" which had haunted me the whole morning, became agonizing, now that the moment of trial was at hand. My legs would scarcely carry me. "Provided he knows nothing of it already: if he does, it will be a most terrible affair!" My chief anxiety was to avoid one of those dreadful family scenes, of which I had had a sample at the time of Cæsar's disagreement with his employer. I reached home very much depressed. I told all and everything to my mother and to Cæsar, who did their best to raise my spirits. Fortunately, my father knew nothing of the matter, and dinner passed off quietly. In the warm

season my father was accustomed to retire to his room after dinner, to indulge in a short *siesta*. I took courage and followed him unperceived. Just as he came to the door, I said, "I wish to speak with you, Sir, if you please." He motioned to me to go in.

Time, I am sorry to say, had not improved my father's temper, at least at home. I say purposely *at home*, for it would be a mistake to believe that he wore abroad the same stern knitted brow which he invariably showed indoors. On the contrary, my father was a conversable, merry companion, never without his jest, and as such, a great favourite both with high and low; so that, in all that transpired of our family disagreements, public opinion always declared itself in his favour, and all the blame (of course we had our good share) was laid at our door. What a pity, said our neighbours, that such an easy, companionable man should have such undutiful sons!

My father's temper, as I have said, had become much soured, especially since Cæsar's brain-fever. The gloom of offended majesty hung always upon his brow. His words, when he chanced to speak to any of us, were generally tinged with bitterness. On our part, the fear of irritating him involuntarily, and giving rise to some painful scene, kept us constantly on our guard, and as far as we could do it without affectation, we remained silent in his presence. From this mutually unpleasant disposition had sprung up a state of permanent restraint and embarrassment in all reciprocal intercourse, which rendered the interview I was seeking singularly distressing.

"What do you want?" asked my father in a tone of icy coldness, standing in the middle of the room, as a hint that he wished me to be brief. I began, much intimidated—

"I received a letter this morning, which it is my duty to make known to you. I regret that it is a disagreeable communication."

"You may spare all rhetorical preface," replied my father, "it is long since you have accustomed me to expect nothing good of you. What is the matter now?"

"Here is the letter," rejoined I, "but before you read it, allow me to ask one favour; which is, that you will listen to me for a single minute, after you shall have become acquainted with the contents." My father, without yielding to, or refusing my request, took the letter, which I held towards him, and ran his eyes over it. "You'll never be satisfied," cried he, in a tone of concentrated passion, while he crushed the paper between his fingers, "till you have been the death of me. Get out of my sight!"

"For heaven's sake, father, be calm, and hearken to me!"

"Get along with you, I say; rid me of your presence. I will listen to nothing; I will hear nothing!" and he went towards the door to leave the room.

The consciousness of injured innocence gave me courage. I placed myself between him and the door, saying, "Trample on me if you will, but hear me. I deserve your pity, and not your anger. Do not bruise one who is already so deeply wounded. As true as there is a God in heaven, I am innocent!" And I burst into tears.

"Don't fancy you can impose on me. You may spare your tears and your lies!"

"God is my witness that I speak the truth!" rejoined I with great warmth; "I am punished for a supposed participation in the disturbance which occurred at the congregation last Sunday. I was not present."

No sooner had I uttered these words than I felt that I had gone further than I meant to do. I would willingly have retreated, but it was too late.

"You were not present?" said my father, much softened. "Well, if what you say is true, all may be set right. It will be easy for you to prove that you were not present. Where were you?"

There was no drawing back now, I must needs drink the cup to the very dregs.

"I was in a place where I ought not to have been. I will tell you everything, but have some indulgence for me;" and I made my sincere and entire confession. The storm, hitherto suspended, now burst over my head in full fury. My father hurled the bitterest reproaches at me. I was, according to his words, a gamester past redemption, a hardened spendthrift, an habitual frequenter of hells, a disgrace to my family, and the shame of his grey hair.

I received this hail-storm of invectives without compunction, I allow, for I felt I was not in the slightest degree what he described me to be; but I listened with entire submission. I did not utter one word, nor venture the least extenuation of my fault. I had been wrong, and this was an expiation.

So far right. Tired at last of pouring out his wrath, my father took his hat, and went away. I had been loaded with abuse, but I had spared my mother and my brothers a disagreeable scene, and that was a great comfort.

Next day my father never addressed himself to me, nor even once looked towards me; but the following morning he came into my room. "Well," said he, "did you take any steps yesterday?"

"None," replied I.

"You really take the thing with a composure which is vastly philosophical, certainly, but not a little provoking," rejoined my father, fretting.

"Pray, advise me, Sir; put me in the way; tell me what I can do, and I will do it."

"You say so with an air of resignation, as if you were required to make a sacrifice for a stranger, and yet it seems to me it is your own business."

"So it is; but, excuse me, there is no will wanting on my part; only really I do not see what there is to be done, unless I were to attempt to prove an *alibi*, which would expose me to the gossip of the whole town."

"Who proposed any such thing? That is what you always do. You put bitterness into the matter; there is no getting you to talk calmly."

I saw that the only way of avoiding a storm was to hold my tongue, so I remained silent. Shortly afterwards, my father resumed—"There are a hundred ways to try; first of all, to see the Commissioners of the Provincial Board. Perhaps

they will listen to reason. After having condemned you, they cannot refuse to hear what you have to say in your defence. You must bestir yourself, I say. The worst thing you can do is to sit with your hands folded, as you are doing."

My father, I regret to say, did not understand the dignity which there is in submitting silently and without complaint to an inevitable evil. Cæsar, wrapping his toga around him, to die decorously, instead of attempting an impossible defence, would have appeared ridiculous in his eyes.

I bowed my head, and merely answered, "I will go and see the Commissioners of the Board."

CHAPTER XIX.

INJUSTICE AND OPPRESSION BEGET THE SPIRIT OF REVOLT; UNCLE JOHN PREACHES TO THE WINDS.

And in fact I did go. Not one of the Commissioners, except Mr. Merlini, condescended to receive me. The most civil contented themselves with sending me notice that there was an acting Commissioner for the month, charged to take cognizance of all communications relative to the affairs of the University, and that it was to him I ought to address myself.

I did not give up the point; I was determined to drain the bitter draught. I knew that there was to be an extraordinary convocation of the Board at the University. I waited in the street for the members, and addressed them one by one, hat in hand. The greater number would not even give me a moment's hearing. I was dismissed like a troublesome beggar. From one or two of the most humane I got a few hasty words, such as, "I really can do nothing in the matter,"—"The Board has given its decision,"—"See my colleagues," accompanied by a gesture, plainly signifying "Enough!"

Every feeling of manly dignity was crushed and bleeding within me. To know oneself to be innocent, and yet to

receive, as it were, slaps in the face from those of whom one is the victim, is a sore trial, which I wish to nobody, not even to my bitterest enemy. And truly the floods of indignation which overflowed my soul at this unworthy treatment, had no bounds. I knew that day what it is to hate.

Still I did not desist. I had made up my mind to be able to say to my father, "I have done all that a man *can* do." So I composed a letter as respectful and calm as possible, in which I maintained my innocence, and begged to be confronted with my accusers. I shewed this to my father, who approved of it highly. I made as many copies as there were members of the Board of Public Instruction, and left a copy at the house of each, though in more than one case I found it difficult to procure admission for them. The servants, of course, were more rude and insolent than their masters. Not one of the gentlemen thus addressed made any answer, or even acknowledged my communication.

This letter softened my father for a time. He took a copy, and circulated it with much pride among his friends. Strange but true, my father, who certainly did not spoil us by too much tenderness, was vain of our talents, and plumed himself upon any success we might achieve. The human heart is a strange medley, *guazzabuglio*, as Manzoni says.

Mr. Merlini, the ever acting Commissioner for the month, was, as I have said, the only one of the gentlemen of the Board who deigned to receive me. He was, I suppose, in a merry mood, and would not lose an opportunity of enjoying a joke. Mr. Merlini, as I have said before, was a funny man.

There was in him a rare compound of the ape and the hyena. He positively played with us, as a cat plays with a mouse, with the same nicety, the same ingenious ferocity, the same intense relish. He hated us all because we were young. He inflicted injury with delicate refinement, and for the sole pleasure of the exercise. Thus, for instance, his antechamber, in which heaven knows what long hours we had to wait, was always hermetically closed in summer, and open in winter to every wind that blew. He would let a student leave his presence quite reassured, whose sentence of rustication or expulsion he would sign a quarter of an hour afterwards, or had indeed perhaps already signed. He would send away terrified at some expression designedly dropped, another, who had in fact nothing to fear.

Mr. Merlini received me with great amenity. "In what could he be of service to Mr. Farina?" pretending to mistake me for another. "I beg your pardon, Sir, my name is Benoni." "Ah! true, my memory is so weak;" it was as strong as iron. "Well, how can I be of service to Mr. Benoni?" He could be of great service to me, answered I respectfully, by giving me the means of bringing to light my innocence, and overthrowing the false allegations on which my condemnation had been grounded.

The good man looked as if he had fallen from the clouds. He pretended to be completely ignorant of the whole affair, or rather, he averred that such a thing had never passed. Surely, there must be some mistake! I was obliged to explain every detail, to go over again each and all of the

circumstances, which he knew much better than myself: the date of the sitting of the Board, that of the letter from the Secretary, the nature of the penalty, and the cause to which it was attributed by public rumour. I wound up my account by protesting my innocence most energetically. Mr. Merlini listened with a chuckle of delight.

"You have," said he, "such a clear method of stating a case, that I think I do recollect something about the business you have mentioned. You plead not guilty, of course, it is your full right so to do. What culprit is fool enough to avow himself such? ih! ih! ih!——You put me in mind of my last cause before the Criminal Court, in which I made a speech, I must allow, though I say it who should not, that obtained a brilliant success. The case was that of a parricide. The evidence against us was overwhelming. My man took it in his head to plead guilty. 'You shall do no such thing,' said I, as his good luck would have it, for upon my speech in his defence, he was acquitted." And Mr. Merlini chuckled again.

Truth to say, I did not very well see the connection of this anecdote with the matter in hand, but I did not tell him so. "You say you are innocent," resumed Mr. Merlini, "all very right, but where is the proof of your assertion?"

"I beg your pardon, Sir, but is it not the part of the accuser to prove culpability? innocence needs not to be proved, it is always presumed, is it not?"

"Capital, perfectly well said, closely argued, my dear Mr. Benoni. It is easy to see that you have a lawyer's blood in

your veins, and it does my heart good to see the progress you make. Only in your case, my dear Sir, be so good as to remark that the tribunal has pronounced its judgment, and that therefore there is what we call *res judicata*, ih! ih! ih!——"

"But if the Tribunal has passed condemnation without giving the accused a hearing?"

"That depends, my dear Sir, upon the exceptional nature of the Tribunal. The Board of Public Instruction is a kind of paternal magistracy, which is presumed never to prevaricate, and against whose decisions there is no appeal,—you see?" said Mr. Merlini, this time with a grin.

"Be it so," rejoined I, "but cannot the Board of Public Instruction, when better informed, rescind its own decisions?"

"For such a thing to happen there must be serious motives, very serious motives ——. Now let us be frank; you interest me, and I would wish to serve you. To obtain the indulgence of the Board you must merit it, Sir; and there is but one way to do so, and that is, to tell me here, quite between ourselves, in perfect confidence and secrecy, as if in confession, the names of the authors of last Sunday's disturbance."

"Inform against my companions!" said I with a start. "Even if I knew them, which I do not, nothing could induce me to be guilty of so base an action!"

Mr. Merlini ceased to be velvet-pawed, and put forth his claws. "You do know them," said he, "and you are one

of the number. And even if you were not, the detestable words you have just uttered make you their moral accomplice. Go, Sir, you receive but what you deserve."

What answer could be made to logic of this kind? I attempted none, and giving the worthy Commissioner no opportunity to bid me twice begone, I departed, full to the brim of disgust and indignation.

I gave a faithful account of all the endeavours I had made, and of their fruitlessness, to my father, who, by way of comfort, told me, I had not known how to set about it. From that day I endured a martyrdom like that of the Saint who was slowly broiled upon a gridiron. A running fire of cutting words, of bitter sarcasms, of transparent allusions, was continually kept up at me. If anything went wrong at home, it was my fault; if it was bad weather for three days together, it was laid to my lawless conduct. Sometimes I was struck with a sort of admiration at my father's untiring perseverance and ingenuity. Time had no effect upon him, he made a handle of every thing. Was it cold, hot, or rainy, "rain, heat, and cold little mattered for those who could sit comfortably at home." Each holiday invariably brought the remark, that "every day was a holiday for some people." Did apples or peaches appear at table, "they were so much like billiard balls, were they not?" In a word, my father's fertility of invention was inexhaustible.

A would-be thundering letter from my uncle the Canon came to add fuel to the fire. It was read and commented

upon, and heaven knows with what bitterness, in my presence. But what was far worse was, a few days after, the arrival of my uncle in person. The worthy Canon's head had never been of the strongest, and the ten years which had elapsed from the time I had served mass for him, had not improved it. One of his foibles, which I think I have omitted to note, was to believe that his presence could set everything to rights. His favourite expression on all great occasions was, "I'll go myself!" and he had come.

With him the very devil came into the house. His lectures to me were endless, and I must say, to my own credit, that I listened to them with a patience and a meekness that made me wonder at myself. Sometimes, however, the trial was too great, for human endurance has its limits. Then came frightful scenes. I think I still hear the shrill treble of the Canon's voice, swearing by all the gods that he would disinherit us all, and reduce us to beggary. My father declared for his part that he was tired of sacrificing himself for a set of ungrateful children, and that he would retire into the country.

Such scenes made all of us indeed, but my poor mother especially, inexpressibly wretched. She was indefatigable in her efforts to console me, and so were Cæsar, Fantasio, and dear uncle John, who had warmly espoused my cause, and whose kindness was unceasing; but this sympathy was as a drop of honey in a vase full of bitters. My home was become odious to me, and except at meal times I was always out, either at Fantasio's or with uncle John. "Courage, my

dear fellow," would this kind relative say to me, when he saw me unusually depressed—

" Sta, come torre, fermo che non crolla
Giammai la cima per soffiar di venti." *

" Don't give those blockheads, Merlini and Co., the satisfaction of putting you out of spirits. Let it be your revenge to feel that you are worth a thousand of them."

" Why, uncle, I confess that I should prefer some less philosophical and more solid vengeance."

" And what good would that do you or anybody ? Suppose you could even cut off the heads of the whole Board, you still would have done nothing. New Merlinis would start up, and fill their places. Merlini and Co. are the fruit of the tree, my dear boy, the evil lies at the root."

At last, when it pleased God, my uncle the Canon went away, and I enjoyed a little comparative peace. I had still before me nine months of forced leisure, and I tried to make occupation for myself. I wrote successively a legend in stanzas of six lines—a sort of thing Tommaso Grossi had just brought into fashion by his *Ildegonda*—next a tragedy, and then a comedy. It was always the same subject under different forms—the reflection of the state of my soul. An innocent man who struggles, protests, and falls, crushed by triumphant oppressors. I devoured every Italian or French translation of the works of Shakspeare, Goethe, and Schiller I

* ——— Be as a tower, that, firmly set,
Shakes not its top for any blast that blows.
Cary's Translation.

could lay my hands on. The burning passion that breathes in every line of the last, held me captive. I read over and over with a sort of frenzy of delight his more juvenile productions, "the Minister," and "the Robbers." I had a positive passion for the philanthropic highwayman, Charles Moor, whose image was quite irresistible to me, and haunted me day and night.

A book of another description, the *History of the Regeneration of Modern Greece*, by a French author, I read with intense interest and emotion. It developed in me, as if by magic, the germs of feelings which till then had existed only in a latent state, and gave a definite form to hitherto vague aspirations. A people of heroes who tear asunder the bonds of slavery, claim their nationality, and found their liberty upon the smoking ruins of their principal cities! What a sublime spectacle!—what a lesson, especially for us, the heirs and continuators of Greek civilisation—for us once so great, now so little—for us, like the Greeks, divided, crushed, writhing under foreign dominion! I had not waited till that day to feel and deplore the wrongs of my country; but never had the conception of a remedy presented itself to my mind in so clear and attractive a form.

This *History of the Greek Revolution* told at full length the beginnings and the successful development of a secret association called *Hetaireia*. Founded by three obscure young men, Scoufas, Kontos, and Diceo, the Hetaireia spread rapidly to all points of the territory, and made its way to all classes. The Klephts especially, a warlike mountain race, electrified

by the national songs of Riga, the modern Tyrtæus of Greece, came into the association in a mass. The Hetairists used to meet in the churches, to prostrate themselves before the altars, and there exchange their arms. They took each other by the hand, formed a mysterious chain, and pronounced the following words:—"Thy life is my life, thy soul is my soul;" and by this oath they put all things in common. The Hetaireia reckoned among its adherents names which have since become historic, such as Botzari, Kiriacouli, Michele Condurioti, Maurocordato, Ypsilanti, and many others, of whom the greater number have since paid their debt to their country by dying in her cause.

This mystery—the association of religion with liberty—this devotion of one to all, of all to one—the heroic end of so many noble hearts, inflamed my imagination. I naturally compared impressions with Cæsar and Fantasio, an interchange in no way calculated to calm the effervescence of my mind. "No cold faint-hearted doubtings" ever troubled our friend, whose confidence in man was great, and in himself unlimited. I was, on the contrary, rather deficient in both, and this among so many points of sympathy, constituted the principal difference between us.

"Are we not," would Fantasio say, "twenty-four millions of men? Are we less intelligent, less brave than the Greeks? Read the history of our own times and you will see of what Italians are capable when well directed and commanded—you will see the miracles of valour achieved in Spain, in Russia, everywhere, by our Italian legions. Is the foreign yoke

which weighs upon us, less heavy, less degrading than that which crushed the Greeks? Do we bear it with greater patience? What, then, is wanting to enable us to do what the Greeks have done? Nothing, but that we should understand each other. We want a Hetaireia, that is all."

These sentiments, and others of the same stamp, were generally expressed before a small circle of intimate friends, of which Cæsar, Sforza, (my old school-fellow,) and I, formed a part. Fantasio's enthusiasm and burning passion became contagious. Cæsar chimed in harmoniously. Sforza, in whom an ardent and most excitable mind was concealed under a cold exterior, considered Fantasio's statements as a mathematical demonstration. I was the only one who hazarded some objections, or started some doubts. But this was a feeble obstacle, which the passionate eloquence of Fantasio bore down in a moment. From this time forward, politics absorbed our thoughts, and furnished the subject of our daily conversations.

This new bent could not escape the penetration of my uncle John, before whom I never scrupled to attack the Government with the greatest vehemence, and who set himself with all his might to stop me in that course. "You see things," he would sometimes say, "not as they are, but as your imagination paints them. Pretty nearly every one, I allow, despises and detests the Government, but it does not thrive the less for that. Analyze society, and tell me where you see those manly virtues, that spirit of self-sacrifice, which regenerate nations. Look at our nobles, for instance. The

old men sulk at the Government; do you think it is from the love of liberty? Pshaw! they do so because they would like to hold the reins themselves. The young ones think only of their horses and their mistresses. The middle class is eaten up by selfishness; each individual man is engrossed by his office, or his counting-house, or his clients—all, in general, by the rage for making money. Number One is their god."

"But the people, uncle?"

"I come to them next. The people are ignorant and superstitious, (it is not by their own fault, to be sure, but they are so,) and therefore the slaves of the priests, those born enemies of all progress. The people hear mass in the morning and get drunk at night, and think, notwithstanding, that all is right with God and their conscience. What then remains? A certain number of young men, crammed with Greek and Roman history; enthusiastic, generous—I do not deny it—but perfectly incapable of doing anything, but getting themselves hanged. Absence of virtue, my dear boy, is synonymous with impotence. The mass is rotten at the core, I tell you. Suppose, for a moment, that you could make *tabula rasa* of that which exists, what would you build with such materials? An edifice which rests upon decayed rafters is faulty in its foundations, and will crumble with the first shock. The evil is at the very root of society."

"Well, then," cried I, vehemently, "let us attack the evil at its root."

"Are you in earnest?" said my uncle, rising in alarm,

and biting his nails; "do you think that society can be turned like a pancake? Why, the boy is on the straight road to the *Ospedaletto*," (the Bedlam of Genoa.)

"But, uncle, if to find fault with the fruit of the tree is useless, and to attack the root is madness, anything like progress is impossible, and one has nothing to do but to fold one's hands in despair."

"That is not what I say. Progress comes of itself; Providence wills it so. There are in the moral world, as well as in the physical, mysterious principles at work unknown to ourselves, and even in spite of ourselves. Thanks to this latent working, things are better to-day than they were a hundred, or even fifty years ago, and fifty years hence you who are young will see still further improvement. One must take present evil with patience, and give time leisure to do its work. Let each in his humble sphere try to become better, and render better those around him. There, and only there, lies the corner-stone of our future regeneration. As for me, my dear friend, when, in the first shop into which I may happen to go, I am only asked the fair price or thereabouts of the article I go to buy, I shall consider my country to have made a more important conquest than if it had given itself all the institutions of Sparta, and of Athens into the bargain."

There was in these statements of my uncle a portion of truth and a portion of exaggeration, and unfortunately the latter weakened the former. Then, uncle John was in my eyes somewhat of a misanthrope, and consequently, his advice

had less weight with me than it deserved. But had it even been otherwise, the most consummate wisdom and experience would probably have been lost upon one whose moral sense was each day revolted, and whose blood was every instant made to boil by the workings of a Government, of which it might be truly said, in the words of Mr. Gladstone, that it "set up as a system the negation of God."

Two incidents that befell me, one immediately after the other, will find here their proper place. The reader will see whether they were likely to reconcile me to the existing order of things.

CHAPTER XX.

AN OLD FRIEND IN A SAD PLIGHT; TENDER SOLICITUDE OF THE CARABINEERS LEST THE CITIZENS SHOULD CATCH COLD.

It is customary in Italy for pious people, or such as wish to appear so, to attend, during Passion week, a course of extra religious lectures and prayers, called *Spiritual Exercises*, or *Retreat*, which go on at that period in almost every parish church. These Exercises were obligatory upon the students, and a course of them took place, during three days, for their especial use, in the church of the University. The time for the Exercises having naturally come round during my year of rustication, I could not and did not attend them, nor did I think of fulfilling these extra duties in any of the parish churches of the town.

So I was not a little at a loss when, my term of exclusion being come to an end, I was asked, besides other certificates which I had produced, for one testifying that I had gone through the Spiritual Retreat. Fortunately, the secretary happened to be in good humour that day, and gave me a hint how to repair the omission. There was the Convent of Buon Ritiro, said he, in which there was a course of Spiritual Exercises going on at that moment, for the benefit of a certain number of novices preparing to take the vows. The

secretary assured me that the laity also were admitted without difficulty, and would even find board and lodging gratis, (nominally so, for in fact it was the custom to make a present on leaving, which amply repaid the hospitality received,) and that if I went there, and brought him back a certificate, there would be no difficulty in the way of my readmission. I thanked the secretary very much, and went off immediately to the convent he had mentioned, where my request was granted without hesitation, and thither I retired for four days.

One evening—it was at the end of the second day—I was attending the "Meditation." The church was buried in darkness, and I was kneeling against a confessional, when I was startled by a voice close to my ear. "Don't stir!" whispered the voice, "I am Vadoni. I want to speak with you. Leave the door of your room ajar to-night. Tell me in what passage you are lodged, and the number of your room." "No. 5, Passage B, on the right, second floor."

Vadoni, it will be remembered, was one of my schoolfellows—the rat-hunter. I had scarcely met him since leaving College, and for two years had lost sight of him altogether, and indeed almost forgotten his existence. My curiosity was therefore excited, and I could not shut my eyes, though I had to wait for him a long time. At length he appeared. His paleness, his haggard features and sunken eyes, told a sad tale. We had several hours' conversation, the substance of which I shall condense into as few lines as possible.

Vadoni's history is that of more young people than may be imagined, even now-a-days. He had neither father nor mother. His sole relation was an old bigoted uncle, with whom he went to live when expelled from College. His uncle was a hard, dry-hearted miser, who grudged his nephew every mouthful he ate, and allowed him barely what was necessary for existence. Cold and dreary indeed was the poor boy's life under this niggardly and melancholy roof. His uncle's society was entirely composed of priests and monks, and with one of these latter Vadoni became rather intimate. The monk belonged to the Convent of Buon Ritiro, where he often induced the lad to go and see him. Vadoni's acquaintance extended in course of time among the brotherhood, and he made a great friend of the superior of the convent. Everything looked so clean and neat, and every one was so kind and good-natured to him, that the convent soon appeared a paradise compared to the hell in which he lived. Vadoni was a weak-minded youth. His new friends excited his religious tendencies; they shewed him his expulsion from College in the light of a warning from God to withdraw from the perils of the world; in short, they managed so well, that he fancied himself called to a monastic life. His uncle, of course, encouraged him; and poor Vadoni, at twenty years of age, entered the Convent of Buon Ritiro, to begin his noviciate.

Six months of that life sufficed to open his eyes. He never had had a real vocation for the cloister. What he had seen, and still more what he had guessed, had com-

pletely dissipated the illusion which had led him towards it, and disgusted him for ever. He went to the superior, candidly opened to him the state of his mind, and demanded permission to leave the convent. Now, this did not at all suit the views of the superior, who had good reason to wish to make a monk of him.

The moving springs of old Vadoni's life were an immoderate love of money, and an intense fear of hell. To satisfy the first without falling foul of the second, the old miser had planned bequeathing all his property, which was considerable, to the convent of Buon Ritiro; but on one condition, which was, that the superior of the said convent should induce Vadoni the younger to take the vows. The old man had still sufficient fear of the opinion of the world not to like the idea of leaving his nephew totally unprovided for. As a monk young Vadoni could not inherit, while the community to which he would belong, as a body corporate could. Such was the bargain agreed upon. All these particulars had been revealed to young Vadoni by a brother novice, who had lately died of consumption, or rather of a broken heart. This unfortunate young man, while thought to be in the agonies of death, had overheard a conversation between old Vadoni and the superior, which had made him acquainted with the whole scheme. Now, every one can see the interest the superior had in not letting the lad escape out of his clutches.

So he left no means untried to divert him from his purpose—advice, exhortations, entreaties, soothing, menaces, but all in vain. A severe watch was then set over the young

novice, and he was cut off from all external communication, even from his uncle's visits. At the same time various hard duties were imposed upon him, as well as various modes of self-mortification, among which one consisted in making the sign of the cross innumerable times upon the floor with his tongue; his food was lessened in quantity, every book was taken from him; in short, he was made as miserable as possible.

In the meantime, the period of Vadoni's majority was approaching, and consequently the fatal hour for pronouncing irrevocable vows. Once more the superior made every effort to bring him to the determination, but once more he failed. So then the poor fellow was plunged into a *segreta*, that is a subterranean dungeon, lighted only by a little lamp set in a death's head. His food was bread and water, and his bed was straw. During the night he was frequently startled from sleep by sounds of chains, and mysterious voices, threatening him with eternal damnation. The unfortunate Vadoni could not stand this trial, he implored in mercy to be taken out of this abode of terror, which had become insupportable to him, and made every promise required of him. "In one month," ended Vadoni, "I shall be of age, and I shall be—— a monk. Yes, I feel that my powers of resistance are exhausted. I was not born to struggle. They have overcome, crushed, annihilated me. I am lost unless you save me. I saw you the other day, and a gleam of hope shot across my mind. I have no one in the world to help me but yourself!"

Alas! what could I do for him—a poor young student,

without connexion, influence, or money. Vadoni had arranged in his head a romantic plan, which I was to execute, viz., to procure for him a disguise, a rope-ladder, and a passage on board of a ship for America. I immediately felt that this was quite beyond my powers, and told him so. I tried to rouse his courage, and to stimulate him to resistance, but in vain. There was no longer a spark of energy within him. "I am lost beyond redemption," cried he in an agony of despair; "I wanted to be protected against my own weakness. To what purpose should I resist? one half hour of that terrible *segreta*, I feel it, would overcome all my opposition!"

"I will see your uncle if you like," said I. "Write him a letter, and I will take it. I will plead your cause with all my might." "Well, be it so," returned Vadoni, despondingly; "to-morrow evening at church you shall have my letter. I hope nothing from it, but God bless you nevertheless. You have always been kind to me. Depend upon my affection. I shall certainly make a bad monk, but, I hope, never a bad friend." On the evening of the following day he brought me the letter, and on the next I left my temporary seclusion, heaven knows with what feelings.

The same day I went to call upon Vadoni's uncle. He was not at home. I returned on the following one, and again missed him. I then left his nephew's letter, with a few lines from myself, in which I requested the favour of a conversation with the old man. Several days passed without bringing an answer. At last, one morning when I was just preparing to pay my third visit, I received from Mr. Vadoni an invita-

tion to call upon him at an hour he named. I was exact to the time. I found an old man of seventy years at least, with a face like a ferret, thin, dry, and yellow as parchment, and I felt at the first sight of it that my poor friend's cause was lost. "You must judge, sir," said the man, "of the painful surprise I received from that strange letter of my nephew's, which you were so kind as to transmit to me, and with the contents of which I *know* you are acquainted, (he laid a marked emphasis on the word,) when you shall have read this other letter which I have received from him to-day, and in which I am delighted to find the expression of those sentiments which are habitual to him." I took the letter he held out to me, and perused it. Truly it was young Vadoni's writing. He expressed the utmost regret for having sent the preceding epistle, written, he said, in a moment of aberration. He protested his willingness and readiness to show his sense of his uncle's kindness to him, by entering into that state which he had voluntarily chosen.

"I will not seek to inquire the cause," added the old man significantly, "of that moment of error of which my nephew accuses himself. I am persuaded, sir, that you in no way contributed to it, for you must certainly be aware how preposterous and even dangerous it would be to interfere in matters upon which hangs eternal salvation." So saying he bowed me out, without my having the opportunity or the inclination to utter a word. I easily guessed that the *segreta* had exercised considerable influence on my poor friend's determination. So then he was irretrievably sacrificed! Sure

enough, a few months afterwards I heard that the novice Vadoni had taken the vows.

My second adventure was of a less melancholy but no less instructive character in its way. During a fortnight the whole town had been talking of nothing else but of a monster serenade, which was to be given in honour of I do not remember whom. Fantasio had a mind to hear it, and Cæsar and I, with our father's due permission, accompanied him. The serenade was very delightful; but one grows tired of all things, even of the best, and after having listened twice to the music in two different places, we had had enough of it. "Let us go and take a turn," said Fantasio. So we lighted our cigars and set off. Chatting as we went we came to the bridge of Carignano. It was a delicious night, as bright as day. The moon shone full upon the front of the church of Santa Maria, and shed floods of silver brightness on the expanse of sea spreading below. Attracted by the loveliness of the scene, we stood a moment in contemplation of it, and then began to pace up and down the bridge. It may have been one o'clock in the morning. Two carabineers came past, stopped and seemed to watch our movements.

The carabineers were a corps extremely well appointed, well paid, and very faithful, charged with the upper police: what with high and low, there were I know not how many kinds of police. The government, of which they were the blind and firm instruments, looked with signal favour upon the carabineers, whom, on the contrary, the citizens cordially detested. They always went about in couples, like monks,

were tolerably civil, very absolute withal, and never *could* be in the wrong. They had a particular spite against students, in memory of the part taken by them in the insurrectionary movement of 1821. The corps still exists, but I am happy to say it is much changed for the better in many points.

We had continued smoking and walking up and down for some time, when the two carabineers came straight up to us. "What are you doing there?" said one of them.

"We are taking a walk."

"It is very late to be taking a walk."

"It is never late," answered one of us, "to take a turn on such a beautiful night."

"The night is made for sleep," retorted the man of arms, "and you had better go to bed."

"We are not sleepy," replied we in chorus.

"Never mind," replied the carabineer, "you will do well to go home."

"Is this an order you give us?"

"It is, gentlemen;" was the laconic answer.

"And suppose we do not obey your order?"

"We shall be obliged to take you into custody."

What was to be done? Were we to give ourselves the satisfaction of passing the night in prison, and cause our families some hours of unspeakable uneasiness?—to what purpose? to be sent home the next day without any further ceremony than that of a reprimand. For such was the course that things usually took in cases of such arrests, which were not without precedent. This was by no means

a tempting prospect; it was better to give up the point, and swallow the pill, however bitter. And so we did. We left the bridge, and set off in the direction of the town, closely followed by our two acolytes, whom we heartily wished, as well as their employers, at the bottom of the Red Sea.

This little adventure brings me, by a natural transition, to say two words of the Piedmontese Government, and of its doings, up to the time when the *Statuto* came to put an end to a state of things as incredible as true. A few facts will suffice to give the reader an idea of it. Those who may be tempted to tax me with exaggeration, have only to open a History of Piedmont, lately published,* from which the greater part of the statements and anecdotes I am about to relate are taken.

* Storia del Piemonte dal 1814 ai giorni nostri, di Angelo Brofferio. Torino, Tipografia Ferrero e Franco. 1851.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE STATE OF PIEDMONT PREVIOUS TO THE GRANT OF A CONSTITUTION, HINTED AT IN AN ANECDOTICAL WAY.

PIEDMONT lay prostrate under the worst of all despotisms, the despotism of the sword. Military governors and commandants lorded it over the country, like true Pachas. The power of these men being literally unlimited, daily encroachments on the jurisdiction of the civil authorities became inevitable; and in the inextricable confusion and constant struggle for supremacy, which were the natural results of such a state of things, the peaceable citizen, who knew neither where to seek nor to find justice, was of course the sufferer. The following fact may give some idea of the dignity and moderation these high functionaries displayed in the discharge of their duties. A gentleman not having raised his hat as the carriage in which the king chanced to be, drove by, the Governor of Genoa suddenly attacked him, and, loading him with the most virulent abuse, knocked his hat off his head. It so chanced that this gentleman belonged to one of the first families of Genoa, and was moreover personally known to, and highly esteemed by the Emperor Alexander of Russia, with whom he frequently corresponded. To these circumstances, and on a demand from his powerful

patron, he owed the satisfaction, eventually afforded him, of the removal of the Governor from Genoa to another government. But how many acts of similar, and even of more gross misconduct, were left unpunished, for a single one that was not entirely so!

The sway of the Commandants in the small towns, as arbitrary and unlimited as that of the Governors, was still more immediately oppressive. In populous cities individuals escaped notice, but not so in country towns, where each man was known by name and by sight to the Commandant, and where, for instance, it became an unpardonable crime to pass before the little Pacha without taking off your hat.

Next in authority, or rather in unlimited power, to the military, were the clergy, and the monks of every hue, especially the Jesuits. This celebrated sect had, as it were, enveloped the whole kingdom in a net. They had establishments at Voghera, Nice, Aosta, Chambery, Turin, and Genoa. These two last towns were their head-quarters. They had, moreover, under their influence and immediate direction, many brotherhoods, half religious half political, such as the *Ignorantelli*, the *Ladies of the Sacro Cuore*, the *Congregation of St. Raphael* for children, that of *Sta. Dorothea* for young girls, etc., etc. With such multiplied means of action, it is not surprising that they succeeded in monopolizing public instruction. Primary schools, colleges, universities, all were under their authority. The Jesuitical spirit reigned at Court, among the high functionaries, and invaded every branch of governmental or judicial administration. In short,

to get on at all, affiliation, real or supposed, to this sect, was necessary. By means of the confessional, and by corrupting servants, they obtained possession of domestic secrets, which they communicated to the police, thus causing divisions in families, scandalous law-suits, and reprimands; in short, all the variety of measures termed economical, (*economiche,*) a general name for all kinds of arbitrary injunctions, and petty interference in all and every act of private life, on the part of the police. Two Jesuits offered to the director of police of Genoa to furnish him with all the information he could desire.*

The bishops, whose affiliation to the sect was nearly general, supported the Jesuits with all their might, and were in their turn supported by them in the most arbitrary and unjustifiable actions. The Bishop of Acqui caused a Jewish girl, afflicted with mental alienation, to be torn from her family, on the plea that she had manifested some inclination to become a Christian. The mother and two brothers of the unfortunate girl, guilty of having claimed her, instead of redress were thrown into prison. The only daughter of the Belgian Chargé d'Affaires at Turin, fell in love with a young man, whose situation in life forbade his aspiring to her hand. Her father was a Protestant. It sufficed that the young girl had whispered into the ear of a lady connected with the Jesuits, that to marry her lover she was ready to become a Catholic, for the father to find one night his daughter carried off. After infinite search, it was discovered

* Il Gesuita Moderno, per Vincenzo Gioberti, vol. iv. p. 361.

that the young lady was under the protection of the Ladies of the Sacro Cuore, but all the demands and solicitations of the diplomatic body failed to obtain the restoration of the misguided girl to the parental roof.

As for legislation, suffice it to say, that the Statutes of 1770 formed its basis. The King, Victor Emmanuel, on his return to the throne in 1814, brought them anew into vigour, from hatred to the French laws, by which the country had been ruled since 1798. This was recalling to life, by one stroke of the pen, tithes, *banalità*, *commende*, primogeniture, privileges of all kinds, monks of all colours, military courts, ecclesiastical courts, courts of royal domain, (by which whole classes of citizens were withdrawn from the operation of the common law, and individuals implicated in one identical fact, were subjected to different law, to different judges, to a different form of trial,) to say nothing of exceptional tribunals, incapacities of Protestants, segregation of Jews, etc., etc. Torture was abolished, it is true, by a subsequent decree, but executions by the wheel, and with red-hot pincers, amputation of the hand previous to hanging, the quartering of the dead bodies of criminals, and the exhibition of human limbs, were maintained.* If these exorbitant penalties were but rarely applied, the credit of this must be given to the mildness of manners, which served as a sort of corrective to the severity of the law. Such were the first benefits that Victor Emmanuel bestowed on his people. This weak Prince, who used to say that he had

* Till 1831, when abolished by Carlo Alberto.

slept during fifteen years—the period of the French occupation, carried his hatred of all that was French to a pitch of frenzy. Thus, for instance, there was a question at the beginning of his reign, whether the fine bridge, built by Napoleon, over the Po, should not be blown up; and a Commission was appointed to consider the possibility of effacing the effigy of the usurper from the coin, without its being damaged. A poor clerk in the treasury was dismissed from his employment because he wrote ℓ thus, in French fashion, instead of thus ℓ.

Arbitrariness and favouritism had invaded the sanctuary of justice, and it not rarely occurred, that a verdict regularly given was set aside by a royal edict, or letters of grace. Sometimes the King (*avocando a se*) calling up before himself a cause between private individuals, ordered some magistrate to judge it anew, *without any regard to the decision already delivered.* Sometimes he would authorize a person to bring forward such a proof, or to propose such an exception, *in spite of legal prescription.* On other occasions, the cause would be sent back to the same tribunal to be judged anew. It is easy to conceive how derogatory, both to the course of justice, and to the credit of the magistrates charged with its administration, must have been the practice of thus annulling judgments already pronounced.

Some of the facts related in these memoirs may already have enabled the reader to judge in some degree of the respect attached to individual liberty. No warrant was necessary to put a citizen into prison. The Governor, the Command-

ant, the director of police, the fiscal advocate, the justice of peace, the mayor, the carabineers, down to the lowest agent or spy of the police, each had the right to arrest. But if it was easy to get into prison, it was terribly difficult to get out again. A prisoner might be set at liberty to-day by order of the magistrate, and to-morrow an order from the governor, the director of police, the commandant, would send him back to confinement. One fact among a thousand.

The Marchioness of —— brought a criminal action against the mayor and common council of the burgh of Pecetto, for some alleged act of trespass on her estates. The Senate (the highest law court) non-suited the marchioness, and acquitted the defendants. The judgment of the senate seemed an insult in the eyes of the family of the marchioness, which was powerful, and had friends at court. So one day the mayor and the common councilmen of Pecetto were arrested and carried to the prisons of Turin. The barrister who had defended the cause before the Senate, hastened to the director of police, and shewed him the senatorial decree of acquittal. The director merely answered with a smile, "The Senate has pronounced well, but I have done better," and so sent away the lawyer without any further explanation. The prisoners were not released till it pleased the marchioness that they should be so, and were obliged to promise that they would in future "behave like honest men, with the fear of God *and man* before their eyes."

The privacy of correspondence was constantly violated, as a matter of course, without even a pretence of concealment.

Under such a system, it is needless to say, there could not even be a question of the liberty of the press. Three official Gazettes, one at Turin, one at Genoa, and the third at Chambery, constituted the whole of the political press of the country. They registered the decrees of the Government, the Court receptions, and such foreign news as the authorities allowed to be inserted. Scarcely any books were published, excepting a few works merely scientific, and some insipid novels. Censorship with respect to the theatre was carried to a pitch of absurdity, even to the suppression of the word liberty (*libertà*) in a chorus in Norma, and the substitution of loyalty (*lealtà*) in its place. This, by the way, reminds me of a curious anecdote. Signor Ronconi, a famous barytone, and a great favourite with the public, having, in the excitement of the performance, forgotten the above mentioned alteration, was sent to prison for three days to improve his memory. Not long afterwards, the following verse, in allusion to a peasant who had enlisted, occurring in Signor Ronconi's part in the Elisir d'Amore, *Vendè la libertà, si fé soldato*, (he sold his liberty and became a soldier,) Signor Ronconi, like a clever wag as he was, altered the text into *Vendè la lealtà, si fé soldato*, (he sold his *loyalty*, and became a soldier.) This variation was received by the public, to whom everything in the shape of opposition was welcome, with enthusiasm. Next day came a summons before the police to receive a reprimand for having dared to say that loyalty was to be sold; in reply to which the singer observed, that but a few days before he had been

taught in a way not easily to be forgotten, that *loyalty* was everywhere to take the place of *liberty*. The matter ended here, affording mirth to the whole town at the expense of the Government, and increasing not a little the popularity of Signor Ronconi.

To return from this digression. The only foreign papers permitted were, *La Gazette de France*, and *La Quotidienne*, two ultra-absolutist journals. The law punished any one who might have introduced a book or a newspaper opposed to the *principles of the monarchy*, with from two to five years of hard labour, in certain cases even with death; and any one who might have received one of such newspapers or books by the post, without having delivered it into the hands of the authorities, with two years' imprisonment. A reward of a hundred crowns was paid to any one giving information of the fact.

A flourishing trade was that of spies and informers. They swarmed upon society, like flies on carrion. There were plenty of them of all stations in life, and of every calling. The secret police was the sure asylum of all veterans in debauchery and crime. Many among these, disdaining all disguise, made a parade of their infamy, and carried on their trade in the open day. The *Piazza Nuova*, near the Ducal Palace at Genoa, was the rendezvous of these wretches. There they met in great numbers at certain hours of the day, forming little groups, and going backwards and forwards with a busy look, to the great disgust of the honest citizens. Their victims were especially the small shopkeepers, on whom they

levied a sort of tribute, under the threat of denouncing them as liberals. The acknowledged chief of these creatures was a man with whose name I will not soil these pages; but all those of my countrymen who may read them will instantly recognise the individual, when I add, that in 1845 or 1846 he was prosecuted for murder, found guilty, and condemned to the galleys for life.

I shall say nothing of the treatment inflicted upon those under political accusation. Perhaps I shall have occasion to touch on that melancholy subject in the course of these memoirs. For the present, I shall close this dark picture with an anecdote unfortunately strictly historical, in which the ridiculous vies with the revolting. A political prisoner, who had been long detained in the fortress of Mondovi, made repeated application to the commandant for permission to be shaved. The commandant referred the question to the governor of the province of Cuneo, who granted the requisite authority by the following despatch, which I give verbatim :— "The prisoner shall have his hands, arms, and legs tied to a chair. Two sentinels shall be placed, one on his right, the other on his left, and behind him a soldier with a naked sabre. Fronting him shall stand the commandant, with the major of the fortress on one side, and his aide-de-camp on the other. In this attitude," concluded the despatch, "the prisoner is permitted to have himself shaved *at his ease and pleasure!*" (*con tutto suo comodo!*)

CHAPTER XXII.

TANTALIZING DISCOVERY, AND HOT CHASE TO NO PURPOSE; THE VALLEY OF SAN SECONDO.

Two years have elapsed. I am now twenty-one, and a thick circlet of hair has grown under my chin. I should also have a pair of beautiful mustachios—the object of my ambition as a child, if mustachios were not unmercifully proscribed. I have made several attempts towards wearing them, but all have been frustrated. One day, a long, long time ago, Mr. Merlini meeting me in the peristyle of the University with a show of down upon my lip, protested, with sundry indescribable nods, jerks, and grimaces, that he had taken me for a pioneer. I understood the hint, and my budding mustachios fell under the razor. Twelve months later, the mustachios having reappeared thicker than ever, the director of police had the kindness to send me word through my father, that if I did not shave them off of my own accord, he would have them cut off for me—a very simple ceremony, not at all unprecedented. Two carabineers would take you by each arm, force you into a barber's shop, and stand present during the operation. So I was obliged to give up the point.

My studies, as well as those of my brother, are drawing to a close. Though admitted to the University a year after

me, Cæsar had overtaken me during my time of rustication. One year more, and Genoa will possess an additional barrister without clients, and another physician without patients. Cæsar has become much more manly in his person within the last two years. He is a trifle less tall than I am, but stouter, better proportioned, and much stronger. The colour of health glows in his cheeks. His features are not very regular, but altogether pleasing. He has a beautiful mouth and fine teeth, and his clustering chesnut hair shades well a spacious, finely formed forehead. As for me, I am very dark complexioned, very pale, and far too thin for my height, which is above the middling size. My countenance, when at rest, wears an expression of languor painful to behold in one so young, but easily brightens up, and changes for the better. My only beauty, if a thing very common in our country may be considered as such, is a profusion of very black curling hair.

My youngest brother has just left College with a cart-load of books and wreaths of laurel. Save this one, no change of any note at home; my father as stiff, cold, and distant, my mother as patient, meek, and gentle as ever. Since we have become men, disagreeable scenes are more rare. We take greater care to avoid them. We are also allowed a little more liberty, and may go out to walk after supper, without having recourse to stealth. Bad tidings of the crop have come from our uncle the canon. Somehow or other, be it from cold or from heat, this is the second year that the olives have failed. My father delivers on the occasion sundry

lamentable lectures, to which we listen in silence, and the family is put upon a footing of the strictest economy. Uncle John is as odd and as friendly as ever. Cæsar and I go and dine at his house regularly once a-week, when he never fails to repeat that the disease lies at the root of the tree, and that youth is too prone to take its wishes for realities. Evidently, uncle John watches us, and has fears about us.

With Fantasio we are as intimate as ever, or more so if possible. He has thrown off the yoke of the University, and is now LL.D. *in utroque jure*. The circle of his acquaintances has gradually extended, and his influence goes on spreading. He founded a literary journal, and took a journey into Tuscany last year. The journal, like a rose, lived but one day, that is to say, that at the tenth number the censorship suppressed it without any ceremony. As to the journey, its object is a mystery to all, except a few adepts, among whom are Cæsar and myself.

Fantasio had long entertained the project of forming a secret association like the Hetaireia, and had laid down in writing, and shewn us a complete and detailed plan, of which we had highly approved. Among the literary connexions which Fantasio's early contributions to a Florentine periodical had procured for him in Tuscany, there were a certain number of liberal, ardent minded young men, to whom he wished to communicate his plan, in order to induce them to adopt it, so as to found the association in the two Italian provinces at once; for Fantasio's ambition aimed at nothing less than embracing in the same bond all the different parts of the

Peninsula. This, and no other, had been the real motive of his journey. His Tuscan friends would have been very willing to enter into his views; but, as chance would have it, they had just a short time before received overtures of the same nature from a *Vendita* of *Carbonari* sitting at Bologna; and of what use, observed they, could it be to form a new society, when one of old standing, and powerful in its means, not only existed, but was actually within their reach?

Fantasio yielded to this very cogent reasoning, and gave up his political scheme. He resolved, however, to make his journey to Tuscany turn to account in another way, and succeeded in getting a plan of a literary weekly journal adopted and approved. He engaged for himself and some of his Genoese friends to become regular contributors to the new periodical, which was to be published in Florence, where there was considerable toleration with respect to the press. This done, Fantasio left his Tuscan friends with the understanding that if the overtures from Bologna should produce any result they were to let him know, and that, on the other hand, if he were in the meantime to succeed in putting himself in communication with the Carbonari, who could not but be equally at work in Genoa, he would let them know in his turn. I need hardly say how we welcomed Fantasio with open arms on his return from Florence. I shall never forget the accent of triumph with which he said, as he got out of the carriage, "The Italian Hetaireia is found!"

However, he had been in too great a hurry to cry "victory;" for, in spite of all the ardour with which he, and indeed all

of us, sought after this Italian Hetaireia, we could not succeed in finding any trace of it. This failure, far from leading us to the conclusion that Carbonari did not exist, or at least were not actually working in Genoa, only increased our faith, and our veneration for this formidable association, which could so well keep its secret that, although everywhere present it was nowhere tangible.

Carbonarism, as everybody knows, arose in the kingdom of Naples during the last years of the French occupation. Some patriots, flying from the persecution of the foreign government, had retired to the mountains of the Abruzzo, where their only means of existence was making charcoal, (carbone), whence came the name of Carbonari, and that of Vendita (sale), given to the divers groups into which the Association was divided. King Ferdinand, who at that time had taken refuge in Sicily, made the most of the national feeling of the sect, encouraged it with all his might, and went so far as to become a member of it. From that time the Association had spread all over the kingdom of Naples, and thence to all parts of Italy. The Carbonari it was who had prepared and brought to bear the Revolution of Naples and of Piedmont in 1821, although the sect had been vehemently persecuted for some years preceding, and most unmercifully by that same King Ferdinand whom it had restored to the throne. Pope Pius VII. had excommunicated it, and the mere fact of belonging to it was punished by death. Such monstrous rigour, far from diminishing, had increased the fascination of the sect. A halo of sombre

poetry surrounded those exceptional beings, whom the popular imagination pictured as holding their assemblies in woods and caverns at the midnight hour, and continuing their mysterious work, nothing daunted by the thunders of the Vatican, or the prospect of the scaffold.

We had no hope left but in our friends in Tuscany, nor did they fail us. Three months after the return of Fantasio, two young men with a message for him came and knocked at his door. Their tidings were at once good and bad. The overtures from the Vendita of Bologna had led to the most satisfactory results. Carbonarism was being organized throughout Tuscany, and Vendite were already established in all the principal towns; but a special order from the original Vendita at Bologna, confined the work to Tuscany alone, with an express prohibition against going beyond. This was indispensable, said they, for securing secrecy and unity. Each province had its centre of action limited to the province itself, and without any contact with those of the other provinces of the Peninsula. The supreme Vendita alone, stationed in Paris, held in its grasp all the threads of these different centres, and could at any chosen moment put them in communication with each other. Our Tuscan friends could, therefore, do nothing for us, but send the name and address of one of the chief members of the Vendita at Bologna. The two young delegates had no directions for the *good cousins* (another appellation for Carbonari) in Genoa; but they were sure, they said, that the work was progressing here as elsewhere, for the sect was everywhere.

What was to be done? There was but one way to break the spell: to go to Bologna. Fantasio made up his mind to this, and went for a passport. To get a passport in those times was a state-affair. "What particular business had he at Bologna?" Fantasio said that his business was, first to see that famous city, and next to examine and compare some very rare manuscript copies of the *Divina Commedia*, which were only to be found in the library of the Accademia at Bologna. "If his business were not more pressing than that he might wait. Bologna and the library of the Accademia were not likely to fly away from one day to another. He had been into Tuscany last year, had he not? then he had better stay quietly at home for the present and rest." So to arbitrariness was superadded derision. Fantasio had to remain and champ the bit.

We were introduced—Cæsar, Sforza, and I, with a few others—to the two emissaries from Tuscany, the day before their departure. How small did I feel myself in the presence of these two young men, who had been chosen to stake their life in the national cause! I scarcely thought I was worthy to shake hands with them. I could have fallen at their feet and worshipped. The conversation naturally turned upon the Association, on which were centered all our thoughts and hopes. The deep impression they had received as to its extent and power, was very catching. Carbonarism was an immense net that enveloped all Europe. A sign from the supreme Vendita in Paris, could set the whole Continent on fire. The kingdom of Naples alone counted forty thou-

sand affiliated members. The initiated of the mysterious association were to be found on the steps of the throne, and in the most humble cottage. The judge upon his judgment-seat, and the accused in the dock, by means of an imperceptible sign, recognised each other as brothers. A man who had been condemned to death, (his name and the country where the thing had happened were quoted,) and who was to have been executed the next day, had had his fetters loosened, and been furnished with the means of escape during the night. By a word which the prisoner had dropped, one of the guards charged with the watch had discovered him to be a brother Carbonaro, and aided in his escape.

The two emissaries had a special message for the supreme Vendita in Paris. Paris! the unknown, the infinite! The supreme Vendita! A something crowned with clouds charged with thunder! Names were whispered, names which I had never heard pronounced, or met with in my reading from my earliest youth, without a thrill of reverential awe!—names which, in my judgment represented demi-gods—Lafayette, Lamarque, Foy, etc., etc. My heart swelled, my head grew giddy, a passionate longing to achieve some great deed took possession of me. How fortunate were these young men—how I admired, how I envied them! Two handsome, noble, sincere young fellows, if ever there were such, firmly believing every word they said, and ready to bear witness to the truth of it with their blood! One of them fell but the other day, combating the Austrians in a suburb of Bologna. Honour to thee, brave Marliani!

The occurrences I have just retraced are the only ones of any note in the two years we have skipped over, and of which it was necessary to apprize the reader, in order that he should understand what is to follow. I now resume my narrative.

We are in the country. My mother having had a bad cough throughout the winter, which persisted in spite of the change of season, the physicians had advised her to try the effect of country air—not that of my mother's own villa, which was too sharp for her, but one milder and less dry. So we had hired a small house at San Secondo, one of those numerous valleys into which the magnificent vale of the Bisagno unwinds itself. It was a lovely secluded spot, green as an emerald, and quiet as an unexplored forest of the New World.

The house which we inhabited was not large, but neat and comfortable; the view from the windows, though circumscribed, was really beautiful. A wide meadow, animated by herds of cattle grazing peacefully, and tinkling their bells, extended along the front, while a belt of luxuriant vegetation rose on the other three sides. At the bottom of the meadow wound the bed of the torrent, over which was thrown a wooden bridge of the most picturesque aspect. On the opposite side stood a long avenue of aged cypresses, at the very farthest end of which were the parsonage and the modest village church, with its slender steeple shooting boldly above the trees, as if to catch the first rosy tints of the rising sun. The peculiar charm of this little landscape lay in its completely

pastoral character. The house was sheltered from the north wind by Mount Fasce, which rose behind, and whose rich vegetation was already beginning to glow with warm autumnal tints.

Fantasio's abode was but a short mile distant from us. See out there, beyond the church, on the slope facing us, that white house with green blinds. We distinguish it perfectly through the trees from our windows. That is Fantasio's Casino. Most frequently he would come at early dawn, and saunter up Mount Fasce with us, but very slowly, for my mother was of the party, and we were afraid of her getting tired. We would stop at a certain height, make her a comfortable seat of moss and fern, and wait for the coming of the new-born day. Far, far below our feet, spread the wide, the glorious Mediterranean, ever varying, ever beautiful, which, with its gentle swell, seemed as though it saluted the rising sun with a thrill of love and pleasure.

Sometimes it was our turn to go over early with our guns to Fantasio, and then to wander among the vineyards on the hill side in pursuit of game. How delightful was that hill with its soft air, all redolent of the perfume of a thousand wild flowers, and its magnificent view of the panorama of the port and city of Genoa the Superb! Often did we forget the game, and spend hours in silent contemplation, while our souls thrilled with vague but delicious aspirations, rose like those larks, which, starting from beside our feet, would wing their upward way, and lose themselves to sight in the celestial azure. Oh! why, thought we, should there

be bad governments to prevent us from enjoying in peace these lovely works of God, and being happy.

Alas ! we were far from happy ! A plethora of enthusiasm, which found no object on which to expend itself, an exuberance of living power within us, which, for want of employment, wasted away in sterile regret, this was the evil which, like rust, did eat away our lives. Our utter inability to effect any good, or what appeared to us to be good, gnawed, like an undying worm, at our hearts. Fantasio had written twice to the two emissaries, in order to obtain information, but had received no answer. Suppose he himself were to go to Paris ! But how obtain a passport ? What a pity that our uncle the canon was not a canon of the Cathedral of Bologna ! Suppose we were to realize Fantasio's plan of association ! We were in great perplexity. Sforza and Alfred sometimes came to see us, (Alfred had returned from Pisa M.D., within the last month,) and from them we concealed none of our most secret thoughts. To Sforza it seemed that we made much ado about nothing, and his notion was, that, to overthrow the Government, we had but to take a flag with the Italian colours, go into the street with it and cry, " Italy for ever ! Liberty for ever !" and the thing would be done. Alfred stared and looked puzzled, as he used to do of old when Cæsar and I talked in his hearing of princesses and subterranean treasures. " But where are those Carbonari ? where in the world do they hide themselves ?" Such was the chorus that ended all our conversations.

Our disappointment in this respect preyed much on my mind, but was not the sole cause of uneasiness within me. I had felt of late a sense of vague discomfort, a want of interest in all things, a sort of void in my life, never experienced before. Especially since I had been in the country strange feelings would steal over me at times, swell in my bosom, and fill my eyes with tears. The sight of that beautiful rejoicing nature, instead of cheering, saddened and oppressed me. At certain moments I had a morbid desire for solitude, and often spent whole hours seated at the foot of a tree, in the most distant corner of our remote valley, lost in undefined reverie. Oh! that I could but seize on its passage one of those confused images, one of those daughters of air that float through my fancy, like the atoms of dust dancing in a sunbeam! How far off were the times when I used to dream of princesses with golden locks, and coral lips! I was now quite alive to the beauty of my lovely country-women. One of my cousins had lately married, and the sight of the young couple at the wedding party had wrought a sudden change within me. The two young people looked so beautiful, so happy, so much in love with each other, that I quite envied them. Not that I particularly wished to be in my cousin Peter's place, but I wished I could be as much beloved as he was. It must be so delightful to love and to be loved! Life thus intertwined must double the pleasure of existence.

The Rector of San Secondo often came to spend the evening with us, and sometimes we in turn would go to the

parsonage. This rector enjoyed at sixty-five a green old age, and was a man of patriarchal simplicity, half priest half peasant. Instead of making long sermons to his parishioners, he made roads for them, he repaired the bridge, he mowed the grass, and got in the harvest for those who might be sick. We often met at the parsonage another rector of a neighbouring village, who was very intimate with ours; an old, corpulent, asthmatic ex-monk, looking as if, one of these days, his fat would choke him. The talk was often of politics; the two priests were liberals, and made no scruple of finding plenty of fault with the Government. The ex-monk was the more violent of the two. He had been made a free-mason in the time of the French, and gloried in it. His marking peculiarity was a detestation of all monks in general, and of that order to which he had belonged in particular. His politics were summed up in this saying, which he was never tired of repeating, "Hang all monks!" In one corner of the room the daughter of the rector's housekeeper sat spinning, a strange looking peasant girl of sixteen. Santina was her name, but we called her *the Gipsy*, for in truth she had the black glossy hair, and rich brown complexion of a gipsy. Her large eyes were dark and bright, and her look as piercing as an arrow. At first sight her countenance had something repulsive, but when once you were accustomed to it, you discovered a peculiar charm in it, which grew upon you. Santina never lost one word of our conversation, which she followed with intense interest, rarely taking a part, but always, when she

did, by some very original remark. Everything in the expression of her face, and in her bearing, bespoke a nature full of passionate workings under restraint.

With the exception of Alfred and Sforza we had few visitors. My father, who had no taste for the country, came seldom to see us,—perhaps once in a fortnight. As to uncle John, and my eldest brother, who was getting into good practice as a lawyer, they were confined to the town by business, except on Sunday, when they came and spent the day at San Secondo. But we went often into town, which was an hour and a half's walk. Cæsar, Fantasio, and I invariably went in and came out all three together. I was accordingly not a little surprised one morning to find that they had set off very early for the town, without acquainting me. They returned in the evening without a word of explanation. Some days after they went off in the same way. I was extremely puzzled, but said nothing. Another day I came unawares upon them in a very animated conversation; they suddenly broke off at my approach, and appeared embarrassed. We often talked politics as before, but I remarked that the name of the Carbonari never passed their lips, any more than if Carbonari had never existed. No doubt of it, the thing is found. The awful enigma, which we have been hunting after for months and months, is unravelled at last. But why do they not tell me the good news? Do they distrust me? Impossible! What is the use of my torturing my brain about the matter? If they do not speak, it is because they dare not speak. I did

not risk the slightest question which could have the appearance of courting confidence. The mystery concealed under the silence of the companions of my youth was so sacred in my eyes that it even excluded curiosity. Nevertheless there was a sort of cloud between them and me. I was not at ease in their presence, as I feared being a restraint upon them. They also, Cæsar especially, were uneasy before me.

One morning my brother came into my room early. "Had he not left his gun here yesterday evening?" I guessed at once that the gun was a pretext. Cæsar hunted after it in every corner of the room. He sat down and complained of the heat, which was by no means oppressive. He walked backwards and forwards, and talked of indifferent matters, but it was evident that something weighed on his mind. Just as he was leaving the room he suddenly turned round, came to me, took my hand, and hurriedly let fall the following words: "It hurts me to have a secret from you, but this secret is not mine, and—you must not be angry with me. Perhaps I fail in my duty in saying even so much, but I can stand it no longer!"

In the course of the day Fantasio took me aside and said, "You have guessed. Have a little patience. The only question is one of a few months' delay. There is an objection on account of age, but we will see and get over that. In the meantime be of good cheer, and especially try to save as much money as you can." So I was too young! How unlucky! I would willingly have given one, two, ten years of my life to be of age.

From that moment every cloud was dispelled from between my young companions and me. I lessened my expenses; I smoked less; I grew avaricious; and prepared myself in meditation and silence for my initiation into mysteries which I burned yet almost dreaded to know.

CHAPTER XXIII.

INITIATION, BRIGHT DREAMS, MISGIVINGS, HIGH-WROUGHT ANTICIPATIONS, AND FINAL DISAPPOINTMENT.

MONTH had followed month, autumn had given place to winter, the annoyances of the University life had succeeded to the pleasant leisure of the country, and I was still in the same state of expectation—no communication of any sort with respect to the great affair, either from Cæsar or from Fantasio, scarcely even a word of encouragement. Fantasio, however, had of late wished to know how much money I possessed, warning me to have my silver pieces changed into gold, and to carry it about me, "for," said he, "you may be called unawares, and you had better be ready to answer the summons when the hour shall strike!" Fantasio repeated this last phrase several times, and dwelt upon it with a peculiar emphasis.

We were in the midst of the carnival, and folly shook her bells most gaily—dances and feasting everywhere. "Shall we go to-night to the Veglione?" said Cæsar to me on the morning of Shrove-tuesday; "I have an engagement for the evening, but I will meet you there at midnight if you like." We settled the room in which we were to meet at twelve. Veglione is the name given to the fashionable public

balls, which take place in the Ridotto of the Carlo Felice Theatre.

The throng was great in the halls of the Ridotto, and the entertainment exceedingly animated. It rained, and was cold without doors; the more reason for flocking thither, where it was so pleasant, so comfortably warm. Everything looked so bright, everybody so happy and gay! Masks were numerous, the disguises generally in very good taste—several of them splendid. It was only half-past eleven; I had still half-an-hour to take a turn through the ball-room; so I mingled in the joyous flood, which came and went, and pressed through the vast suite of apartments. Dancing was going on in two or three different parts, and I could not help smiling, as I passed along, at the recollection of my unfortunate *début* in the gay science of Terpsichore, time out of mind. A cross fire of greetings, witticisms, jokes, quips, and pranks, authorized by the occasion, burst from every side, like crackers, around me.

A compact group stops the way. What is it? It is a servetta, (servant-maid,) true Genoese type, with her velvet spencer, national mezzaro, and short petticoats, carrying on a dialogue with a Gianduja, Piedmontese type—Government and opposition face to face. "Two crowns a-month!" screams the servetta, who is always supposed to be seeking a situation, "two crowns a-month to such a one as I! Get out with you!—do, you ill-mannered cur!" (protracted cheers from the bystanders.) "They are all alike, these polenta eaters." (This is addressed to the public.) "Starving and penniless,

they come and fatten upon us." The majority of the audience, who belong to the opposition, cheer this delicate allusion to a favourite dish of the Piedmontese, and to their proverbial poverty.

Further on, a black whiskered wet nurse, with a wooden baby in her arms, is quizzing (the technical word for that sort of fun) a superannuated Adonis, whom she has pushed up into a corner. This wet nurse, as I hear from my neighbours, carries terror wherever she goes. She knows everything about everybody. In vain the poor man, who does not relish the joke, makes desperate efforts to escape. His merciless persecutor follows him closely, and insists upon having the address of the shop where he bought his flaxen wig. The would-be Lovelace now grows seriously angry, which is against the rules, and so the greater the amusement. But midnight strikes, and it is time to go and join Cæsar.

He was not yet in the room appointed, so I sat down, and looked upon the motley crowd that moved before me. From time to time a mask would scream out my name, or shake her finger threateningly at me. Two black masked dominoes stopped at the threshold, and looked around, as if in search of somebody; then they darted towards me. The taller of the two called me by my name. "What are you doing all alone?"

"Looking at fools, as you see."

"Expecting some one?" chimed in the short domino, evidently a man, but accoutred as a woman.

"Exactly so; expecting somebody."

"A lady, I'll lay any wager?" continued the short one.

"A black whiskered one, at all events," said I.

"A beautiful fair one; I know her," added the tall domino.

"If so, you know more than I do."

"I know her name, and will whisper it to you." The tall domino stooped, and let fall into my ear these words—

"*The hour has struck!*"

I started as with an electric shock, and said, rising, "At last! I am ready."

"Then follow us!"

They led the way through the thronged rooms, down the stairs, and into the street. I followed closely at their heels; and so we entered an obscure neighbouring alley, where my leaders stopped. "I beg your pardon," said the taller of them, "but it is indispensable that we should bind your eyes." I nodded acquiescence, and a handkerchief was tied round my head. It was cold, wet, and dark, and we were all wrapped in our cloaks. As directed, I turned the collar of mine up round my face. My companions took me each by one arm, and so we proceeded in perfect silence, sometimes to the right, sometimes to the left, and sometimes, as it appeared to me, turning back again. Two persons, as far as I could judge by the sound of steps, followed near. At length we stopped. I had not the slightest idea where we were. I heard a key turn in a lock; in we went, and up two flights of stairs. A door was pushed open, a passage traversed, and we had reached our destination.

My eyes were now unbound, and I found myself in a vast

chamber, rather richly than elegantly furnished. A huge fire burned in an enormous chimney, and a heavy lamp, with an alabaster globe, shed a mild, soft light around. There was a thick, dark red carpet upon the floor; a wide drapery, in flowered damask of the same colour, hung in rich folds at the upper end of the room, and probably concealed an alcove. We were five persons in the room; the two who had been my escort, two others, equally shrouded in black dominoes—apparently those who had followed us, and myself. The tall black domino, who appeared to be the chief, and whom I shall henceforth call the President, placed himself in an arm-chair; the two last comers seated themselves upon chairs on his right and left, and the domino dressed as a woman, behind him. The President then motioned to me to advance, which I did, and there I stood facing the four men, and in front of the alcove. After a short pause, a kind of examination began. It was the tall domino who spoke, and he always addressed me in the second person singular.

"What was my name, christian name, and age?"

I told them.

"Did I guess the purpose of my presence there?"

I believed I did.

"Did I persist in the intention of entering the confraternity of the *Good Cousins?*"

I did with all my heart.

"Had I formed a clear idea of the terrible duties that I took upon myself? Did I know that, as soon as I should have taken the solemn oath, my arm, my faculties, my life,

my whole being, would no longer belong to myself, but to the order? Was I ready to die a thousand times rather than reveal the secrets of the order? Was I ready blindly to obey, and to abdicate my will before the will of my superiors in the order?"

Of course I was. If I had been told to open the window and throw myself out of it, head foremost, I should not have hesitated.

"What claim had I to enter into the brotherhood of free men?"

I had none save my love for my country, and my unalterable determination to contribute to its liberation, or to die in the attempt. As words to this effect gushed forth, hot as lava, from my inner soul, I saw, or thought I saw the curtains of the alcove gently move. Was it an illusion, or was there some one hidden behind? I did not dwell upon the circumstance, for what signified a mystery more or less in this great mystery?

The examination having been brought to a close, the President made me kneel down, and repeat the form of oath, which he pronounced in a loud and distinct voice, dwelling with emphasis on the phrases most pregnant with meaning. This done, he added, "Take a chair and sit down; you may do so now that you are one of us." I obeyed. A name of adoption was then chosen for me, and some mysterious words and signs, by which I could make myself known to my brethren of the order, were imparted to me, but with an express injunction not to use them, except in cases of necessity.

"I must now," added the President, "give you some explanations and directions. You now belong to the first grade of the order, which, however, is only a stage of probation. You have no rights, not even that of presentation; you have only duties, but these will be easy. Keep your secret religiously, wait patiently, in a spirit of faith and submission, and hold yourself ready for the moment of action. In due time you will know the Vendita of which you are to form part, and the chief from whom you will have to receive direct orders. In the meanwhile, if there are any orders for you, they will be transmitted by the cousin who has presented you, and whom you already know. The order to which you belong has eyes and ears everywhere, and from this moment, wherever you may be, whatever you may do, it will see you. Bear this in mind, and act accordingly. The sitting is at an end."

Here the President rose, and through the beard of his mask kissed me on each cheek, and on the mouth. All present did the same. I had a certain sum to pay, destined to the poor and infirm among the brethren; my eyes were once more bound; and we went out. The way back was shorter than it had been in going, but quite as irregular. "We will separate here," said the voice of the tall domino as we stopped, "pursue your way without looking back; this is the first act of obedience that I require of you." So saying, he untied the handkerchief which covered my eyes. Obedient to his order, I went on without turning, and came out upon the Piazza of the Carlo Felice theatre. The street whence I issued was that

same dark alley, where, two hours before, I had joined my mysterious companions, and where they had blindfolded me. I should have liked to take a good walk, but it rained hard, so I went home to bed.

I was too much excited to sleep. The scene in which I had just acted a part had been, from its very simplicity, most impressive to me. Free-masons and Carbonari, I had been told, were fond of surrounding their initiations with a certain pomp of phantasmagoria, calculated to strike forcibly the mind of the neophyte; and I had expected at least a great display of symbolical forms, and drawn daggers. Now, in this I had been most agreeably disappointed. There had been nothing in my reception but what was simple and dignified. These were the men I wanted—men in earnest, and without fuss about them. The tall domino had captivated my fancy—I wondered who he could be. A chief certainly, to judge by the deference the others shewed towards him; but who was he? His Italian was far more pure and more harmonious than is common among Genoese, and at the same time less affected than the language of the Tuscans. I should say he was a Roman. Then the apartment into which I had been introduced, was it the one in which he lived? If so he must be wealthy, and belong to the first classes of society, for the furniture of the room where my initiation had taken place bespoke habits of luxury and comfort which were not those of the middling class of my countrymen, even when rich. The fire in the chimney, for instance, was quite an aristocratical indulgence, which few of the burghers, however well off,

would allow themselves. As to the two last-come dominoes, I would have wagered anything that they were Cæsar and Fantasio. The height was precisely theirs, and an indescribable something in their way of giving me the embrace, had been to me like a revelation confirmatory of the fact. It was true my initiation had taught me nothing, and I was just where I had been before; but the rest would come in time. Let me consider. What could I do to deserve the confidence of the Association, to rise in rank, and so acquire the means of being useful? How I wished to achieve some great exploit, but I could not tell what. Ah! if that floating image, which has constantly haunted me of late, and which I always cherish in my secret soul, would take a body, and encourage me if only by a gesture, of what should I not be capable! . . . . In the midst of these vague thoughts, sleep overtook me, and the impressions of the past hours, taking fantastic shapes, were reproduced in my dreams.

In the morning I made haste to claim recognition from Cæsar, by means of a mysterious sign. Cæsar shewed himself agreeably surprised, as afterwards did Fantasio, at this piece of intelligence. I followed the example of their reserve, and kept to myself my conjectures with respect to the two dominoes of the preceding evening. I told Fantasio that in future it was from him I was to wait for orders. Would that they might quickly come! I thanked him, at the same time, for having proposed and got me received, in spite of the objection of age. It had not been without some difficulty,

hinted Fantasio, that he had succeeded. The order, as he said, was very strict on this point.

So at last I have reached Archimedes's resting point, and may now move heaven and earth! The wish that has tantalized me so long is at length realized! I am one of the free men—I have brethren throughout the whole world—my life has now an aim! How proud I feel of myself, with what profound pity do I look down upon the mass of my *profane* companions! I dream of dangers, of sacrifice, of success, bought by a noble death—of glory—of what not?

But a man cannot always dream. So I began a course of studies in physiognomy, of which Lavater himself might have been jealous. Taking it for granted that two persons out of ten whom I met in the street belonged to the sect, it remained for me to determine which were the two elect, and this could not be done without a close scrutiny of all the individuals who passed. That fair-haired young man, was he one? or that fine dark fellow yonder? Of course, all those who had remarkable features, or a foreign air, all those in particular who wore the forbidden mustachios, could not fail to be Carbonari. Two or three times I hazarded the signs without obtaining any answer, but not without trembling from head to foot at the thought of the injunction I had received on this head, and of the invisible eye which watched all my motions. As to the tall domino, I identified him at least ten times with ten different persons. Thus I employed the leisure left me by the order, which chose to prolong my honey-moon

beyond the usual term, apparently that I might enjoy to the full all the sweets of our mystical union.

Two months had glided past since the day of my affiliation, and to my question, fifty times repeated, "Any orders for me?" Fantasio had as often answered by a significant shrug of the shoulders. I began to fret and grumble. Not that my faith in the extent or the power of the sect was in the least degree shaken, but I thought it humiliating, with all my good will, to be left aside like useless lumber. As to Cæsar, who, although my senior in the order by four months at least, was apparently in the same predicament with myself, if he did not explicitly say that I was right, he showed by expressive gestures that he rather shared my impressions. Neither was Fantasio satisfied; but from the fear of injuring discipline he tried to dissemble his discontent. "A little more patience and I should see! One of the cousins, a traveller, was just come from Paris, *bearer of definitive orders*," he would add in a mysterious tone. Very glad I was that the cousin had had a good journey; but for my part, I confess, I should have preferred something more substantial.

Fantasio came to me early one morning, looking bright, and in high spirits. "Did I not tell you so, you faithless man? I have an order for you." At the word "order," I pricked up my ears, like a war-horse left long at rest, at sound of trumpet. "At last!" exclaimed I, drawing a long breath of satisfaction, "and what is the news?" "The news is that you must have the goodness to betake yourself, at twelve o'clock to-night, to the bridge of Carignano. We are all convoked

there." "God bless you! are we really?" replied I, "and to what purpose?" "I cannot tell," returned Fantasio, "all I know is that we are to go armed, such are the orders." Armed! this was more than enough to fire my imagination. "Armed, did you say? this looks like a rising, Fantasio, does it not?" "If it does not I do not know what does," was the answer. "At all events, we shall see. Do you and Cæsar come, and call for me at my house about half-past ten o'clock—good bye!"

No doubt the decisive moment is come at last. If it were not for action of what use would arms be? All my enthusiasm rekindles. How I reproach myself for my unreasonable distrust—how odiously absurd I seem to myself! I will shed the last drop of my blood, if need be, to make amends. Not a moment to be lost. Quick! Cæsar and I ransack the house; all the forgotten old arms we can find pass a strict examination; we make a selection, and we go out to buy ammunition.—The day seemed dreadfully long. At last ten o'clock struck. In a moment we were armed like two highwaymen, each of us with a sword-stick, two pocket and two horse-pistols. Thus accoutred, and enveloped to the chin in our cloaks, we sallied forth with the resolute step of men determined to conquer or to die.

Fantasio was ready, armed to the teeth, and we set out arm in arm. From the Acquaverde, where Fantasio lived, to the bridge of Carignano is a pretty good distance, but it did not appear long to us, so earnestly were we discussing impending events. We laid down our plan of campaign, and solemnly

engaged, whatever might happen, to keep together, and not be separated in the affray. The night was just such as conspirators could wish, dark as pitch, and pretty cold for the season. As we came upon the bridge of Carignano some notes from an accordion were heard. The melancholy modulations took me quite by surprise, and had a singularly powerful effect upon me. A chill ran through me from head to foot. Fantasio pressed my arm. The accordion was the instrument adopted by the Good Cousins to transmit signals to a distance. We made towards the point whence the sounds proceeded, and found a man wrapped in a cloak, with whom we exchanged some words of recognition. The man bade us follow him. We took to the left of the church of Santa Maria, and passing through a little lane came to a solitary open square space, where once stood the palace of Fieschi. Here we were told to stop, and had to wait some time. The retired and secluded spot was well chosen for the occasion. "It seems that we are the first," whispered I to Fantasio, seeing no one. "Look to the left of the square," answered Fantasio, "and you will see that we are not alone." And in truth, by dint of straining my eyes, I did think that I distinguished on the spot to which he pointed some human forms. "This square is very small," observed I, "and if the convocation is general I do not know how it can hold us all. Have you any idea of the number of Good Cousins in Genoa?" "Thousands and thousands," answered Fantasio; "but it is probable there may be partial convocations at several points."

Our guide, who had vanished, now reappeared, and desired

us to follow him onwards, which we did. A movement towards the left of the square took place simultaneously among the living shadows scattered about, till, at the word "halt!" from our guide, all stopped. There were four small distinct groups, including ours, standing at short distances from each other—in all, fifteen persons. I counted them, but without being able to recognise individuals wrapped in cloaks, and in the shade of night. A short pause. Twelve began to strike at the Church of Carignano, close by. With the first stroke, a tall figure, hitherto concealed in a dark corner, rose to view, like a ghost from underground, and pronounced in a hollow voice the following words:—"Pray for the soul of —— of Cadiz, sentenced to death by the high Vendita, for perjury and treason to the order. Before the twelfth stroke has died away, he will have ceased to live." The clock tolled slowly on. The echo of the last chime was still vibrating, when the voice added, "Disperse!" and each group moved off.

What effect this scene—well got up certainly, only too well—may have had upon the rest of the spectators, I never had an opportunity of knowing; but the too evident melodramatic arrangement of the whole thing was an entire failure as regarded us three. It might perhaps have been otherwise, had our minds been less worked up beforehand. As it was, we saw at a glance, instinctively, that all this bloody tale was, thank God, a mere fiction, and that, if our cousin of Cadiz met no worse mishap than the one alluded to by the sepulchral voice, he might live to a good old age.

So the stirring emotions of this endless day, this mystery, this arming, had all been for the mere purpose of figuring in a miserable stage trick, in bad taste, and of listening to a goblin story, scarce fit to frighten children. It was too bad.

Fantasio was in a state of consternation. He allowed that we had been played upon, but he threw all the blame on the big-wigs of the order, as he called them; all men of a certain age, and distrustful of youth; unwilling, therefore, to employ us in any serious matter, but anxious at the same time to keep alive our ardour, and maintain our high idea of the sect. Notwithstanding all this, it was no less true and certain that the order was powerful, that it had roots everywhere, and was not to be trifled with. "We are in for it now," said Fantasio, "and so we must remain. Perhaps it might have been better to have realized my former plan of association; but regret is vain, and our oath prevents anything of the kind." (One of the articles of the oath, in fact, forbade the Good Cousins joining any other secret society.) "But nothing stands in the way of our creating for ourselves an independent sphere of action. Now, this is what I propose: that each of us should sound those of his acquaintances whom he considers worthy, and secure their co-operation for the day of action. No affiliation, no oath, no secret signs, nothing of what is characteristic of secret societies. Let there be a mere verbal promise to come forth when called on. It was in this way that in 1821 each Carbonaro surrounded himself with a number of willing adherents, who were bound by no oath, and who were called *Federati*. Let

us do the same. We shall thus have the double advantage of giving employment to our activity, and of preparing precious elements for the triumph of the common cause. What do you say ?"

We entered with all our heart into the views of our friend, and it was agreed that we should associate in this our independent work Alfred and Sforza, (the latter of whom, by the bye, was the first on Fantasio's list of presentation for a Carbonaro), and that we should begin operations on the morrow. We might have said on this very day, for it was three o'clock in the morning when, tired of talking and wandering about, we parted from Fantasio. Fortunately, this time our long nocturnal walk had given umbrage to no one, not even to the carabineers, of whom we had met several couples, and who let us pass undisturbed.

CHAPTER XXIV.

INTOXICATING EFFECTS OF A LETTER; THE INVISIBLE GODDESS BECOMES VISIBLE; BLISSFUL MEETING.

THAT same day, when I came in to dinner, Santina handed me a letter. My reader will remember Santina, the daughter of the rector's housekeeper at San Secondo—that strange-looking girl, whom we used to call the Gipsy. At the request of her mother, mine took her into our service. A very odd, wilful creature, this Santina; sometimes skulking away for hours, heedless of the call of any one; sometimes sulking at one or other of the family, so far as neither to speak to, nor look at him for days; but so quick withal, so intelligent, so considerate, so attached, that in spite of her whims she was a favourite with everybody at home.

"Who sent it?" said I, taking the letter, which Santina held towards me.

"I don't know," answered the girl moodily; "the man who brought it said you would know."

It was a small letter, glossy, elegant, and perfumed. The seal represented a little Cupid with his finger on his lip, and the motto was "Discretion." While I was examining the seal, Santina added, "It is a lady's letter."

"How do you know?"

" I am sure of it; see if it isn't."

I opened the note, and cast my eye over the few lines it contained. Santina was right. I felt as if a flame thrilled through me from head to foot.

" Didn't I tell you so?" returned Santina, with a curl of her lip.

" Now, don't be foolish, Santina!" and away I sped to my own room. The letter ran thus:—

" I know your secret. I know to what a noble task you have devoted yourself. Souls like yours do not want encouragement; but you may perhaps not be sorry to learn that a friend takes an interest in you, and follows you with her best wishes. If this sympathy is welcome, be to-morrow at the Acquasola between four and six o'clock in the afternoon, and wear a white camellia in your button-hole. Not a word of this to any living soul. You do not know me, but you shall in proper time and place, *if you are discreet.* In the meanwhile, think sometimes of her who often thinks of you."

The first impression of this letter was almost painful from its very intensity. Strange, that the effects of strong joy and grief should be so near akin! My heart beat as if it would fly out of its prison to meet the beautiful unknown. I felt oppressed, almost suffocated, by my happiness. But this was soon over, and gave way to a gentle flow of unmixed delight. Oh, joy of joys! oh, rapture beyond compare! My dream of love is realized, my ideal has taken a shape and body! I am beloved! What intoxication in the very word! The angel of my visions is come down from the seventh heaven to take

me by the hand! There is something within me like a celestial concert! All the fibres of my being vibrate in delicious harmony!

I was in the very act of covering with kisses the blessed note, when a knock at the door recalled me from my ecstasy. "What is it?"

"Dinner is on the table."

"Oh vile prose! plague upon dinner! What man can think of dining who has in his heart all the honey of Hymettus? nay, who is saturated with nectar and ambrosia?" Thus soliloquizing, I hid the precious letter on my heart, and down I went. At the door of the dining-room Santina stood, and frowned upon me. I knew her odd ways, and took no notice. Of course I was not hungry, and could not eat. I longed for the end of the meal, to be once more alone with my secret. At last we rose from table, and I was free.

Once more in my room, I locked myself in, drew forth the darling epistle, spread it out upon the table before me, and sat there gazing upon it, as if my eyes could conjure out of it the name, the surname, and address of the fair writer. But as the words remained unmoved, and there was no appearance of a miraculous working among the letters, I soon grew weary of this fruitless contemplation, and restless to boot; so I took my hat, and went out. I walked straight on, without any aim, like one in a dream, yet hurrying forward, as if upon some errand of life and death. Human figures moved around me, as in a mist, and I distinguished no one.

At last I saw that I was in the country, and alone. Here I slackened my pace, and turned into a solitary path.

It was in early April. The air was clear, the verdure so fresh, the sun so bright! Only yesterday everything looked cold and wintry. What a wonderful change! All hail to thee, sweet nature! never have I admired thee so much, never have I felt thee so intensely as at this moment. Art thou really more lovely than usual, or is it the joy I bear within my heart, that casts this beauteous colouring over thee? A feeling of infinite tenderness overflowed my whole being, I loved the very cows that were grazing quietly in the sunshine. An old woman came up to me, and asked charity. Her husband was sick in the hospital, and she was miserable. The very word sounded in my ear like a discord, almost like a reproach. Ought any one to be unhappy on such a day as this? "Here, my good woman!" and I gave her all the little money that I had. Would I were rich, she should have bread, at least, secured to her for life. I would have done it, and told her so. She looked at me, half thankful half amazed. "It is a lovely day, is it not, good dame?" "Fine weather enough for sowing the crops, if it does but last," answered she with a doubtful shake of the head. If it does but last! Why should it not? How eternally full of misgiving these old folks are!

Who can my unknown be? what her station in life? what the style of her beauty? that she was lovely, was a settled point, but there remained to be determined the character of her loveliness; is she fair or dark, tall or small,

slender like a fairy, or majestic like a Juno? Such were the questions that I asked myself for the hundredth time as I went along, and which, for the hundredth time, remained without an answer. But the riddle of riddles, that which left not even an opening to conjecture, was, "how could she have got at my secret?" Could she belong to the order? I had heard Fantasio say more than once, that women were sometimes admitted. But if such were the case, was it likely that she should have resisted the temptation of letting me know, which she could by the simplest written sign, that she was a "cousin." And then, the supposition of her belonging to the sect did not solve my difficulty, for the affiliated did not know each other. For one instant the idea flashed across me, that my mysterious correspondent was no other than the domino accoutred like a woman; but I rejected the suggestion with horror. Was it not a profanation to attribute those huge feet of the short domino to my fairy queen, for whom I was sure that Cinderella's slipper would be too large! Besides, by all my previous impressions it was settled beyond question, that the short domino was a man. By the way, what a pity she had signed no Christian name! I should then at least have had something of her to adore. What an odd destiny was mine, thus to pass from mystery to mystery! one was no sooner solved than up started another. At all events, that of to-day would be unravelled on the evening of the morrow. Whatever she might do to pass unobserved, I was sure I should know her. I should be lynx-eyed. What a bliss to recognise her, to

tell her, "Yes, yes, it is you, I know it by the beating of my heart;" to see her confusion; to hear for the first time the sound of her voice. In such longings and imaginings I spent the rest of the day, one of the happiest in my life, for there is no happiness like that of anticipation.

But it is ordained, alas! that there should be no unmixed felicity here below. As I read the letter over again before going to bed, a circumstance I had scarcely noted, or rather wilfully overlooked, in the morning, now startled me considerably. It was like one of those wounds that pass unperceived in the heat of action, but the smart of which makes itself felt when the blood begins to cool. I could not now shut my eyes to a fault in spelling, a rather gross one too. The same word was misspelled twice, an aggravating circumstance, with a double instead of a single *r*. These two letters stared me in the face, and made me uneasy. It was a drop of vinegar in the cup of my bliss, the crumpled rose leaf in my Sybarite's bed. I could not get from before my eyes those two unlucky r's, they pursued me even in my dreams, distorting themselves into all sorts of fantastic shapes, and whirling around me like imps of Satan.

Next morning, my first thought of course was my rendezvous for the afternoon, and as I felt rather shy at the idea of perambulating the Acquasola all alone in search of my unknown beauty, I felt the expediency of taking Alfred with me, which I knew I could do without letting him at all into my secret. For I had made up my mind to confide it to no one. It grieved me to have a secret from my bosom

friends—it was the first, but discretion had been enjoined so earnestly, that I could not but feel in honour bound to observe the behest. So I went to Alfred, and merely told him that we would take a walk in the afternoon, and that he was to wait for me.

It is said, that of two friends one is always the victim. The saying may be true, inasmuch as of the two there is generally one who follows the lead of the other. In this point of view, Alfred might be called my victim. He never used to ask where we were going, or why we went one way rather than another, or how long we should stay, or any thing of the sort, but always let me choose for him. It was scarcely three o'clock when I called on him. My toilet was simple but irreproachable; my hat, an article of paramount importance with me, fitted me to a nicety, and set off my black curls to advantage. A white camellia, large enough to be seen at a distance, ornamented my button-hole.

Alfred was ready. "Heyday," said he on seeing me, "what a smart flower!" "A beautiful camellia, isn't it?" and we sallied forth. At ten minutes to four we were at the Acquasola. It was Sunday, and the avenue on the right, the most frequented one, was already crowded. We paced it up and down several times, I staring ladies in the face for the first time in my life, but to no purpose. As the afternoon wore on, the number of persons in the walk increased, and my task of reviewer became more and more difficult in the midst of the throng. Bless me! how that fair-haired

girl in the blue gown looked at me! I turned short round, and dragged Alfred with me after her. We had not gone fifty paces, when lo! what a glance that brunette with the step of a Juno threw at me! Another turn, about as sharp as the first, and off I set, towing Alfred in pursuit of the dark-eyed beauty. We follow her, we pass her, we let her pass. It is not she. She has not even turned her head my way. Let us go and look about us a little in the less frequented avenue on the left. To be sure, now that I think of it, my unknown will be walking there. Love does not like crowds. We paced up and down this other avenue. In vain I opened my coat, in vain displayed my camellia to its best advantage, none of the fair paid any attention to the camellia or its wearer. "Suppose we go back to the right hand avenue, it is so dusty here." "Do you think so?" observed Alfred, and followed me with angelic resignation. Six o'clock passed, and not the least clue to my mysterious friend. "Let us sit down a little, and look at the people passing." We were scarcely seated when the dark beauty came by, and looked at me again. No further doubt, it is she. And we rushed forward once more in pursuit. No, no, it is not she, unless she be a very Tiberius of dissimulation in petticoats. We went on manœuvring in this sort of way till night-fall.—There is an end of it. No more hope left. I was born to be tantalized.

One week, two weeks, three weeks elapsed, and no tidings. What can a man in such a predicament do but write sonnets? Petrarch did, and so did I; but Petrarch had a great advan-

tage over me, which may partly account for the superiority of his performance; he knew very well the colour of the eyes and hair, and the number of syllables forming the name of the beauty he sang, while I was in total ignorance of all these particulars. Still I scribbled, and scribbled, and might have scribbled on to this day, had not a fresh note come to stop me. This time, thank my stars, there was no misspelling. It is true that the letter was very short.

"The white camellia has given much pleasure; thank you. If you go to-morrow morning at nine to the church of the Cappucini, you will find at the further end of the last bench but one a remembrance from your unknown friend. Adieu."

These few lines cost me a night's sleep. I went the next morning to the church, and found at the spot appointed a magnificent nosegay of white and red camellias, forming the three Italian colours, white, red, and green. To seize the nosegay, rush home, and throw myself in adoration before it, was the work of a moment. I shall not detail all the foolish fond things I did with respect to my nosegay. Such of my readers as are in love—and I hope for their sakes they may be numerous, would find it all charming, but those who are not would think it extremely insipid. Suffice it to say, that my heart feasted upon these flowers for weeks, and that when it began to crave new food, my mysterious correspondent contrived for me another agreeable surprise of the same kind. This time it was a beautiful purse—the three colours again, upon which my initials were worked in hair—her own hair, of course, black as jet. Could it have been of any other

colour ?—oh ! prescience of love !—with just such hair I had dreamt of her !

Perhaps it may be thought that love had made me forget politics. Far from it. I owe myself this justice to say that, if my love-adventure had given additional excitement to the romantic turn of my imagination, it had also elated what I may venture to call the more generous faculties of my soul. I felt it a sacred duty to her who had cast her eyes upon me, to render myself as worthy of her as possible ; and having no opportunity for more brilliant deeds, I pursued with ardour the task—certainly humble, but useful, and not unaccompanied by danger—which, in concert with Fantasio and Cæsar, I had undertaken about two months before. And not only had I succeeded in gathering round me a certain number of willing followers, but I had found an unexpected, and most precious auxiliary, in the person of the young Prince d'Urbino.

Of him I had completely lost sight since I had left school, till one day, some five or six weeks back, whom should I alight on in the street but my hot-tempered colleague in the consulship ? We met at once like old friends, and it was quite a treat to see my quondam comrade's plump, rosy, open face glow at the recollection of our childish feats. There was scarcely any change in the outward man—he had grown somewhat stouter—and none in the inward one. The Prince d'Urbino, or rather plain Giuseppe, as he insisted on being called, was as easy and unassuming as when he had made a motion for the abolition of all titles, and as ardent a devotee of liberty and hater of tyranny, as when he had condemned

to ostracism one-half of the Second Division. He had spent all his time, since leaving school, at Naples, where, to use his own expression, "things were in a devil of a state, and soldiers, priests, and spies had it all their own way." He was now as good as settled in Genoa, where he had been sent by his family to look after a lawsuit, which had already been going on for twenty years, and promised to keep going for half a century longer.

I introduced him to Fantasio and to Cæsar, (Alfred and Sforza he had known of old,) with whose concurrence he soon became an active associate in our secret work—I mean the federating scheme, for of the other, that is, our participation in the sect of Carbonari, he was left in perfect ignorance. We had the most unlimited confidence in the Prince, but the secret of the sect was not ours, and we made it a rule to preserve it strictly. The only deviation from this rule had been in favour of Alfred and Sforza, to whom enough had been told to let them guess the rest. But Alfred was the candidate of my choice, whom I was to put forward as soon as I should have the right of presentation; Sforza was Fantasio's, as I have mentioned, and this made a difference.

But love and politics had seriously encroached upon my studies. For almost the last half year I had not opened a law book, and my attendance at the lectures had become so rare within the last two months, that I entertained great misgivings as to the possibility of obtaining the indispensable signatures from at least two of my professors. Thanks, how-

ever, to a method of my own, which I shall explain for the gratification of the reader, I succeeded in overcoming the difficulty. About a week before the end of the quarter, I became very assiduous in my attendance at the lecture, and chose a conspicuous place, as near as possible to the professor's desk. As soon as dictation was over, and the oral explanation had begun, I would listen to it with an interest as intense as if my life were staked upon not losing a word, and now and then indulge in nods and jerks expressive of repressed admiration. Such, alas! is the weakness of the flesh, that no professor—no, not one—was proof against this dumb flattery; and I recommend this recipe as infallible, to all students who may particularly wish to propitiate their masters.

On the morning of the fifth of June—such dates are not easily forgotten—there came another note from my anonymous correspondent. It was as neatly folded, as sweetly scented, as elegant in all respects as the two former ones; but there was a fresh seal, a dove with a sprig in its bill, and the motto, "*I bear good news.*" The news was good indeed!.

"Your unknown friend will be this evening at the Acquasola, in the grove on the south side of the middle fountain. You will recognise her by the nosegay of roses she will have in her hand. If you wish to know her, be there at half-past eight o'clock, not a minute sooner nor later. Adieu till then."

It is easy to conceive the state of flutter and agitation

into which I was thrown by this note. I should then know her at last! How should I behave! What should I say to her? Suppose she were to find me awkward?

It was not yet twelve o'clock; I had still nine hours to remain upon this sort of gridiron. To pass the time, I went to identify the spot, although I knew it perfectly, and to rehearse in anticipation the complex emotions of the blissful meeting. Let me see; by which side shall I enter the grove? If by either of the great avenues, I must walk for a considerable distance within her ken, and I feel that the idea of her looking at me puts me out of countenance, only to think of it. The great avenues will not do. But there is another entrance through that winding path behind—if I could only get to the winding path unperceived. Yes, I can manage it, if I take a round by the carriage road—a long circuit, but what matters that? the road is sunk below the level of the public walk, and the hedge that skirts it will screen me from her view. That is it. I shall come upon her almost unawares. Now, what shall be my first words to her? I am sure I shall look like a goose. If I only knew her name! her name would put me at ease. What a faint heart I have!—I am as timid as a girl. The idea of meeting her glance makes me tremble. If it were only dusk, I should have more courage. After all, at half-past eight the day is on the wane, the grove is thick, and it will be darker there. A weeping-willow forms a sort of canopy over the bench on which she will be seated. A blessing on the hand that planted it! These reflections reassured me a

little; the shades of evening would conceal my embarrassment.

It was one of those intolerably hot days—thirty degrees Réaumur—which make tourists write down in their note-books, that Italians never do anything but lie idly in the shade. Pray, Mr. Tourist, get into a heated oven, and work hard there, if you can! Well, the sun darted fire, as if he were bent upon at once exterminating mankind, by the summary process of melting them down; and by the time I had completed my survey, I was like a hissing iron plunged into water. I should have wished to go and while away an hour or two with Fantasio, but walking so far was beyond human possibility, and I went home. How the hours lagged! I tried to read—impossible! I tried to sleep—I was so worn out by the heat and my emotion, it would not do. I have heard of generals sleeping quietly on the eve of a battle, and I can understand that; but sleeping a few hours before a first rendezvous, passes the powers of flesh and blood. My sole remaining resource was to fret and fume, which I did to my heart's content: but fret and fume as I would, time did not hasten its unchanging course, and I was e'en obliged to wait for the evening.

At eight o'clock I was on the Acquasola. For fear of some unfortunate rencontre, I stole into a corner, as far from the place of meeting as the ground would allow, and kept gazing on the Mediterranean, without seeing it. The loveliness of the evening, the rich tints of the setting sun, were alike lost upon

me. Confused images succeeded each other in my head, like the waves of a troubled sea. One only distinct idea floated on the surface—"in half-an-hour!" I was worked up to a state of spasmodic agitation. The clock of a neighbouring church struck a quarter past eight. I was startled. "Already!" It seemed to me now that time went too fast: I should never be able to regain my self-possession. I rose as with a superhuman effort, and walked on. I had to make a circuit to get to the winding path I have mentioned. I am sure I do not know how I reached it. "One step more, and I shall be within sight of the grove." I felt ready to faint. I hoped, earnestly hoped, that she had not come. She might be prevented, perhaps by illness. The half hour struck. A secret power, something like a spring independent of my will, forced me on. I saw distinctly two figures in white. My sight grew dim; but I perceived, as in a mist, a hand gently extended towards me, and I rushed to receive it.

Who spoke first, what was said, how I came to be by her side—of all this I have not the least recollection. I was in a waking dream. Most likely I did not speak at all, I was so moved. The interview was very short, and very little was said on either side: if I were to repeat the little which I do recollect, it would afford no meaning, unless I could also write down that which gave it so deep a meaning for us; the look, the accent, the very silence. Now, as written language has no signs for such things, I give up the task as an impossible one. Who she was, who were her parents,

what was her station in life, how she had got possession of my secret—of all this I knew nothing, and I had not even thought of asking her. I only knew this, that she was passing beautiful, that her name was Lilla—a pretty name, is it not?—that, between four and five o'clock in the afternoon, she would walk every day with her brother on the bastions of Santa Chiara, and that every day I must go and see her. Oh, to be sure, I would not fail, even if I were to go there on my knees, and kiss her footsteps in the dust! This was all I knew. It was very little, and yet I did not care to know more. I was so happy!

She had been gone for hours, but there I was still, sitting upon the same bench, in the very place her gentle form had filled, feeling still the soft pressure of her hand in mine, the music of her voice still ringing in my ear. All trace of agitation had ceased within me, the beatings of my heart were calm and regular as an infant's, a sense of quiet beatitude pervaded my whole being. The stars shone bright, the nightingales sang very sweetly, thousands of fireflies glanced in the air, which seemed impregnated with love. It was like a fairy dream. I remained there long, inhaling happiness at every pore, and kissing the bunch of roses she had left with me.

When I went home my mother was struck with my air of contentment. "How handsome you are this evening, my darling!" said she, as she passed her hand through my hair, "I never saw you look to such advantage."

"I feel so happy!" answered I, as I kissed her, blushing.

"God bless thee, my own dear son!"

I went to bed repeating aloud those incomparable verses of Petrarch, "Chiare fresche dolci acque," substituting the name of Lilla for that of Laura, and I slept all night without once awaking.

CHAPTER XXV.

NEW RIDDLE; DISCOVERIES; 1830; TWO DOCTORS ADDED TO THE STOCK; DARK CLOUD BETWEEN MY SUN AND ME.

THE next day, going over in my mind, every, the slightest circumstance of my meeting of the preceding evening, the first impression I had received from Lilla's voice came over me again most forcibly. That intonation, which still rang in my ear, that rich and melodious Italian, which was so fascinating from her lips, recalled a voice and a peculiar Italian accent which I had already heard; but when, where, from whom? That was just what I could not recollect. In vain I ransacked my memory—in vain I tortured my brain—I could not find the slightest clue to the enigma. My curiosity was much roused by the circumstance, and I promised myself to catch at the first opportunity which might offer, to mention the matter to Lilla and see if she could throw any light upon it.

But this opportunity did not soon occur. I received fresh letters from her, but there was no word of another meeting. It was impossible for me to solicit one, as I knew neither her name nor her address, and even if I had been acquainted with them I should never have dared to send her a letter without permission. It is true that I saw her every day on the ram-

parts of Santa Chiara, which had become my indispensable daily walk ; but then she was always accompanied by a young man, tall, dark, and of very striking appearance—no doubt her brother, and of course I could only exchange with her a stolen glance or furtive smile. Nevertheless, I was happy.

To see, admire, adore her in silence, to follow the trace left by her divine foot, was more than enough for bliss. How beautiful she was, with her long flowing hair curling around her neck, her slim and elegant figure, her step so resolute, yet so girlish ! One day a stoppage was occasioned in the road by two carriages running against each other, and I could not help passing near enough to her to feel and hear the rustle of her silk dress against my coat. Another time, as I was following her, she quietly dropped a rose. How many kisses did I give that flower !—with what tenderness did I nurse it !—and when it was quite faded, with what pious care did I collect and preserve the withered leaves ! Happy age, when a look, the rustle of a garment, a flower, a mere nothing, suffices to make the youthful soul overflow with torrents of joy !

Lilla wrote to me one evening that she was going next morning at eight o'clock to choose some plants in a nursery-ground, which she named to me, near the Porta Romana. If I wished to see her I had but to go to the place, under pretext of buying flowers. Of course that was enough for me ; and at eight o'clock next morning I was already confabulating with the old nurseryman, whom I complimented on his fine collection of plants, and the excellent care with which he kept

his garden. Lilla came soon after, accompanied by her maid —she never stirred from home unattended. In order to make a proper choice it was indispensable to examine in detail the rich collection before us, and as the garden was very large, this review must of course take some time; so we begged the gardener not to put himself out of the way on our account, but to go on with his work, while we walked round, the maid following at some distance. We were no sooner alone than I made haste to touch upon the point that had so much awakened my curiosity. "I do not know how it is," said I, "that your voice, when heard for the first time, sounded like one not unknown to me. Can you explain this phenomenon?"

Lilla smiled, and answered, "nothing more easy. When I tell you how I came to know you, and to discover your secret, the mystery that puzzles you will be at once cleared up. Let us appear to examine this beautiful rose-tree, and listen to me."

"I have but one near relation left, the young man with whom you have seen me. My brother and I love each other tenderly, and we live together. One day at the end of the last carnival—it was Shrove-tuesday—Alberto, who is always kindly thinking of what may give me pleasure, came and told me that he had arranged a party for me in the evening; I was to go to the opera with one of my cousins and her husband, and after the opera we were all three to put on fancy dresses, and spend a part of the night at the Veglione. Alberto had some engagement and could not accompany me, but he

promised to come and meet us in the course of the night at the Veglione.

"That evening the theatre was lighted with extraordinary brilliancy; the house was full, and the heat oppressive. Towards the end of the opera I was seized with such a violent headache that I was forced to give up the second part of the intended amusement, though sorely against my will, and I begged my cousin to bring me home about midnight. My brother's apartment and mine face each other on the same landing-place. Just as I was entering my room, it struck me that I would see whether Alberto might not also have come in. His door was open, and I entered. Seeing his lamp lighted, and a blazing fire upon the hearth, I concluded that he would be at home ere long, and thought I would wait and tell him why I had returned. I seated myself in an arm-chair by the side of the fire, and soon fell into a doze.

"How long after I do not know, the sound of footsteps awoke me with a start. Evidently several persons were approaching; I jumped up frightened, and mechanically concealed myself behind the curtain of the alcove. From thence I witnessed that scene you know of with an emotion which you may picture to yourself." Modesty obliges me to suppress the part of Lilla's account relative to the impression made upon her by my looks and bearing during the initiation.

"There was a moment," continued she, "in which you fixed your eyes so intently on the alcove that I trembled lest I should be discovered. I perfectly understood the import-

ance of the secret I had unintentionally become acquainted with, and, notwithstanding Alberto's tender affection for me, I dreaded the moment when he should become aware that I knew things which it was not intended I should know. Luckily my brother went out, and I made the best of my way from the room. It was Alberto who always spoke that evening. His voice is very like mine, which will explain the phenomenon you have just now mentioned."

Lilla's time was limited, and we broke off here for the present; but the garden was too beautiful, and too convenient a place, for us not to feel inclined to visit it again. So to it we returned, at first once a-week, then twice, then . . . . well, never mind how often. The fact is, we became great friends with the old gardener, and strolled about his grounds as freely as if they had been our own. Lilla was very fond of chatting, and from one discovery to another, I soon came to be acquainted with all that I wished to know about her.

Her father had belonged to one of the most illustrious families of the Genoese aristocracy. When very young he had fallen in love with an actress and married her. This marriage, considered as quite derogatory to him, alienated from him the greater number of the privileged class among whom he had been accustomed to move. He would have easily consoled himself for this, so great was the happiness with which his loving wife filled his existence, but he was not proof against the slights and humiliations systematically inflicted upon the woman he adored. So he left Genoa in disgust, and retired to Rome, not far from which he possessed large estates.

He there became the father of two children, born at an interval of six years, Alberto and Lilla. The birth of the latter robbed her mother of life. The widower bestowed upon his children, and especially upon Lilla, all the love that he had given to their mother. They were both brought up in the midst of every comfort and luxury which a princely fortune could procure. Lilla especially, by nature rather petulant and self-willed, became a spoiled child. Her every wish, her every caprice was gratified; she never met with the slightest contradiction. A tear or a frown from the little despot would set the whole family in commotion. Such was the school in which she had grown up, and at seventeen she was as remarkable for her beauty as for her imperious and wayward temper.

At that period the young Marquis d'Anfo saw her, and conceived, or, as many thought, affected a violent passion for the wealthy heiress. It is certain, however, that after a few months of assiduous attention, he begged her hand. The Marquis was a perfectly suitable match as to rank; he was of an illustrious family, and related to the house of the Cardinal Secretary of State, who might very probably one day become Pope; but he was noted for his extravagance, and at three-and-twenty years of age had already squandered a considerable fortune. Lilla's father was aware of this, and his first impulse was to refuse a proposal involving so much danger to the future prospects of his darling daughter; but the Marquis was handsome, his equipages were remarked as the most elegant in the town, he was a distinguished horse-

man, and Lilla declared that she would either have him for her husband, or bury herself in a convent for life. In short, the fond father consented, and the marriage took place. Three months after, the bridegroom broke his neck by a fall from his horse in a great hunt in the Campagna, and Lilla remained a widow at seventeen years and some months. A year later, her father, still young, but worn out by grief, and the victim of a scirrhous affection of the stomach, hereditary in his family, expired unexpectedly. From that time Rome became intolerable to the two orphans, who made up their minds to settle in Genoa, where, moreover, their presence was required by business connected with their paternal inheritance.

These discoveries were but little encouraging for my love, and gave rise on my part to many serious and alarming reflections. In spite of the buoyancy and self-confidence natural to youth, I felt that there was a gulf between the rich Marchioness d'Anfo and the son of an obscure and far from wealthy lawyer. And even supposing that the probable opposition of Lilla's brother and relations (of whom she had shoals on her father's side) to a match which would be looked upon as far beneath her, could be overcome,—a thing not very likely,—could I depend so fully upon Lilla's feelings towards me, as to be sure that she might not herself one day repent the union? What I had been able to make out of her character, during about two months of intercourse, was not calculated to reassure me completely in this respect. Such speculations may appear rather too prudent for a youth

of two-and-twenty, who is deeply in love, but it was a marking trait in my nature that, even from my boyish years, enthusiasm had never excluded reflection. There was at the foundation of my character a stratum of distrust of myself, and of others also, which passing excitement might silence for a while, but could not obliterate: a disposition which tended rather to make me exaggerate difficulties than to look lightly on them.

Such was the somewhat depressed mood of my mind, when the Revolution of July 1830 broke out in France. The commotion that ran through Europe, the thrill of hope with which the hearts of all the oppressed hailed the three days, are still present to the memory of every one. Minds were nowhere more elated, hopes were nowhere more ardent than in Italy, and in no part of Italy more ardent than in Piedmont. Upon us—I mean the young men who busied themselves in politics, the Revolution of Paris had the effect of an intoxicating draught, and we daily expected to be called to arms. Fantasio assured us that the Carbonari were roused from their slumber, and that the sect were carrying on their work with the greatest activity; in token of which he had been delegated to promote me to the second degree of the order, which he did in the most simple way, by communicating to me sundry new signs and words of recognition. This second degree, to which I was admitted, gave me no other right than that of presentation, of which I instantly made use to propose Alfred as a candidate.

Those great political events, and the excitement conse-

quent upon them, roused me from the state of depression into which I had been thrown by what I had learned concerning Lilla's family and her station in life. The near approach of my last and decisive examination, which was to take place in a month, proved another wholesome diversion. It was indispensable for me to work hard to make up for lost time, and so it fared with my brother Cæsar, who was exactly in the same predicament with myself. My mornings were occupied by the lectures at the University, a part of my afternoons by the never failing walk on the bastions of Santa Chiara; I had only the night for quiet study, and I often used to sit up till two or three o'clock in the morning. Heaven knows how often the image of Lilla would come between the book and me, and what wondrous efforts I had to make to drive it away. Everything, however, went on as well as I could wish, and at last, one day in August, in the great hall of the University, and in presence of a numerous audience, after a good deal of talking, and being talked to, in bad Latin, I was duly invested with the gown and cap, and obtained the degree of Doctor of Laws, *in utroque jure*. My father and my uncle John were of course present at the ceremony. I do not know whether the former was or was not satisfied with me, but the very next day he installed me in a small room, next to his own study, where I was in future to receive my clients—when I should have any. Uncle John was more demonstrative, and after having embraced me repeatedly, he slipped into my hand a visible token of his satisfaction, in the shape of a little roll of gold

pieces. A week later, Cæsar went through his last examination with great spirit, and the right of life and death over his future patients was bestowed upon him, with the title of Doctor of Medicine.

For more than a month my mother, with my youngest brother, had been settled in the tranquil and smiling valley of San Secondo, the air of which had proved so beneficial to her health the preceding summer. So soon as his examination was over, Cæsar joined her. Fantasio also once more occupied his white cottage. As for me, I was detained in town by the following disagreeable circumstance. For the last fortnight I had been troubled by a rash, which annoyed me considerably. At first it was trifling, and I paid no attention to it; but the eruption, instead of giving way, had increased, attacking especially the head and face, and giving an appearance very similar to that produced by small-pox. This, of course, was far from adding to my beauty, and I felt a strong repugnance to present myself before Lilla in such a condition. For some days previous to my examination I had therefore discontinued my walks on the ramparts of Santa Chiara, not, however, without first taking care to let Lilla know, for by this time she had authorized me to write to her in case of need. I had laid my absence to the account of a slight indisposition, without saying precisely of what kind.

In the meanwhile, my malady getting no better, I made up my mind to consult a physician, who said that the thing was of no consequence, but prescribed sea bathing. I was

desired to bathe twice every day, morning and evening. It was in order to fulfil this prescription that I had remained in town. Time passed on, and Lilla grew anxious. I had to write in order to reassure her, and I thought that I could not do so more effectually, than by plainly telling her how matters stood with me. Her answer came without delay. She was grieved, she said, mortified, indignant at my want of confidence in her. Did I indeed suppose that her affection for me could be influenced by such an accident? This was knowing her very little, it was being very unjust towards her. If I wished to expiate my fault and obtain her pardon, I must go the next morning at nine o'clock to meet her in the garden.

I was weak enough to yield. Lilla was shocked at sight of me, and could not help shewing it. I perceived it and was piqued. Our interview was cool and short. We both felt ill at ease, and when we separated there was a cloud between us. Poor Lilla! It was not her fault but mine. Men ought to take great care not to shock that sense of elegance and beauty which is innate in women, and which is never injured with impunity. My face was red and swelled, and a great part of my hair, my only beauty, had been cut off by order of the Doctor. Really, I was ugly enough to have frightened a quadruped; what wonder that Lilla should have found it out.

A fortnight's sea bathing put an end to this complaint, all swelling and eruption disappeared, and the only lingering inconvenience was some red marks in their place. So I pre-

pared myself to go and join my mother in the country, but not without informing Lilla of my movements and bidding her good bye. She also was about to retire in a few days to a country seat she possessed near Savona. She wrote telling me this, and adding how much she regretted leaving town without seeing me. Now this was not true; at least I conceived it not to be true, for if she had felt the wish, she would not have failed to appoint a day and hour for a meeting in the garden, as she had done before. Under this impression I wrote in a moment of pique—how childish!—that we had better not see each other for the present, as I was anxious not to shock her a second time, (I underlined the phrase,) and set out for San Secondo.

This was not the first cloud which had overcast our heaven, but it was the darkest. Lilla was self-willed, imperious, at times almost violent, and had wounded me more than once. Whenever anything went wrong with her, or she happened to be out of sorts, she had an irresistible inclination to vent her spleen on me, and if I resented the injustice, which I sometimes did, she would put on a most diverting air of injured innocence. One day, for instance, when I had gone to meet her in the garden, I found her in a rage. I was half an hour, she said, after the appointed time. Now, in fact, I had come even some minutes earlier, which was proved by my watch, and by the clock of a neighbouring church. No; it would not do! the watch and the clock were wrong. She stamped her little foot, and protested that she would never come again. These words piqued me

deeply. "Signora Marchesa," said I coldly, (as a stanch liberal she hated titles, and could not bear to be called Marchesa,) "do just as you please;" and away I went. It is but fair to say, however, that she was always the first to come round after these little tiffs, and holding out the white flag, sue for peace.

Lilla was a charming spoiled little thing, with no more judgment, steadiness, or experience about her than a baby. Sometimes she wanted me to teach her to smoke, sometimes she wished me to receive her as a Carbonaro. Every hour brought some new whim, some fresh smiling or pouting, but in all her moods there was truly so much grace, something so sweetly girlish, that it was difficult to be angry. She was not yet twenty, and of course very fond of dress, dancing, and pleasure. To my taste she had too great a liking for gorgeous and brilliant colours, and I was perfectly satisfied, from what she herself ingenuously told me of her success in company, that she could be completely happy, even in my absence, whenever she produced an effect. Her manners with me, after the first two or three interviews, were rather those of a sister with a brother, than of a mistress with her lover, so entirely was she at her ease and unrestrained. Indeed, I think she knew but little about love. With all her faults she was a sweet fascinating little creature; warm-hearted, generous, compassionate, unable to see any one suffer without giving all the assistance in her power. In short, there was in Lilla the stuff of a far better woman than she was.

My first month in the country was, upon the whole, rather dull. I expected every day that Lilla would take the first step towards me, but week after week elapsed without the slightest sign on her part. I felt cruelly disappointed. I bitterly repented my hastiness and harshness. But I had my pride; and I never admitted,—no, not once, the idea of making the first advance myself. "Well, it is all over; it was a dream: I will think no more about it." I did think about it, nevertheless. But, by degrees, I dwelt less upon the subject, and my spirits began to mend. Fantasio, Cæsar, politics, shooting, the beautiful and grand scenery that surrounded me, proved so many salutary diversions: after a time I got the better of my depression, and partially recovered my cheerfulness.

Not long after this amendment, happening one day to be in town, which was often the case, who should be the first person I met in the street but Lilla with her maid? No sooner did she see me than she changed colour; perceiving which I turned my eyes to the ground, meaning to appear not to see her. But she came resolutely towards me, said how glad she was to see me well, and that she wanted to talk with me. Would I meet her the next day at the garden? I told her that I was obliged to be back that evening at San Secondo. Well, would I meet her within an hour at the garden? To be sure I would; and we separated. The interview took place, and never had Lilla shewn herself so kind, so demonstrative of affection. She was more earnest and thoughtful than usual, and there was per-

haps a slight shade of embarrassment about her, which I attributed to her consciousness of having been in the wrong in our last meeting. By this time I had recovered my habitual good or bad looks, and my hair had grown again, upon which she complimented me. She was in town for a few days, was bored to death in the country, longed to come back to Genoa, and see me every day. "Would I write to her?" "Certainly, if she wished it." We parted better friends than ever, and from that day an active correspondence was carried on between us. I remarked with pleasure, that her letters were less childish than they used to be. There was even in some of them a tinge of despondency that pained me. She expressed a degree of contrition which appeared rather out of proportion with her little offences, and begged my indulgence. Evidently there was in Lilla a change for the better; at least I thought so.

I must not close this chapter without registering the demise of the literary periodical founded by Fantasio, which closely followed on the Revolution of July. The paper was not suppressed by Government, was not given up by its contributors, yet it stopped short, owing to a material impossibility of going on. Let us explain the riddle. The Censorship, all whose former toleration of the press had terminated with the three glorious days, began systematically to delete whole articles at once. All those connected with papers know how difficult it is to fill a gap of this sort at a moment's notice; yet somehow or other it was filled, once,

twice, and even thrice. But the day came in which this was no longer practicable, and the paper must either have appeared as a blank sheet, or be stopped altogether. It was stopped. And thus the poor Florentine periodical breathed its last.

CHAPTER XXVI.

WHY I MAKE UP MY MIND TO BREAK WITH LILLA, AND HOW I FAIL IN THE ATTEMPT; MY CONFIDENCE IN HER IS SHAKEN.

In due time we returned to town, and I resumed my occupations. My title of LL.D. only imparted to me the right of giving opinions which no one asked me for, or of appearing in my capacity of advocate in the petty court of a Justice of the Peace. To be admitted to plead before the superior courts it was necessary that I should prove three years' reading under any barrister I might choose. I therefore entered as pupil the office of a highly esteemed pleader, where several of my University companions, and among the rest Fantasio, were going through this legal noviciate. The old counsellor was overwhelmed with business, and paid very little attention to his pupils. Provided he saw us in his first room with some great folio in our hands, at the hours when he habitually went in or out, he required nothing more. Cæsar also had to walk the hospitals for two years, and when he had gone the rounds with the head-physician, morning and evening, his task was done.

The leisure we had was given to politics. There was great talk at this time of gatherings of refugees at the frontier, and of an expedition preparing at Lyons which was to invade and

revolutionize the Sardinian States. These reports, which were not quite without foundation, held men's minds in a state of excitement that greatly facilitated our task of Propagandism. The number of adherents we had gathered round us increased each day. As to the Carbonari, according to Fantasio's accounts, they were very active indeed. Travellers of the order were continually going backwards and forwards; a number of chests of arms had been introduced into the country; a general was expected every moment, to take the command of the approaching insurrection. Everything was going on full speed. When I should be advanced to the third degree, which must be before long, I should know and see all myself. So much the better. For all that, I got no answer with respect to the candidate whom I had presented. The thing was in deliberation; but Fantasio's candidate, Sforza, had been approved of: that was a comfort.

A fortnight had now passed since Lilla's return from the country, and we had only met once. The month of November was remarkably wet, and the walks on the bastions of Santa Chiara were therefore of rare occurrence. The nursery-garden was impracticable. We cast about to find some other place of meeting, but this was not an easy thing, and in the meantime patience was a necessity. Nevertheless, I was much annoyed.

One morning I went to call on Fantasio, and found him from home. In spite of his absence, I went in, to wait for him. There was just then a ray of sunshine, so I took a chair, and seated myself on the balcony to enjoy it.

I was scarcely seated when I heard the house-bell ring, and the horse-laugh of a certain Beltoni, in confabulation with another of our companions. I was more than usually out of humour that morning, and therefore very little disposed to face the running fire of Beltoni's eternal chatter; so I pushed one of the blinds to, and remained concealed behind it.

Beltoni, better known among us as the *Leech*, a nick-name he owed to Fantasio's caustic humour, was a tall, big-boned fellow of five and twenty, the only one of our whole set who was really and completely happy. A man more satisfied with himself, and with less reason for being so, I never knew. Being fat, fair, and rosy, like a boiled sucking pig, he took it for granted that he was a very Antinous. He wore enormous stiff shirt-collars, incredible hats, and clothes much too tight for his figure, and thought himself a very paragon of taste in dress; talked much, laughed at his own wit, and took as a high compliment the broadest quizzing. He had a notion that all women were in love with him, spoke of them disparagingly, and was for ever boasting of affairs of gallantry. Perhaps he had such—he was impudent enough for it. I will not say that he was bad—I do not think he was; but that he was conceited, vulgar, coarse-minded, devoid of any spark of feeling or elevation, that I can vouch for.

Beltoni was in high glee. "A fine *gal*, isn't she?" roared he as he sat down.

"Uncommonly so," was the reply.

"A little bit of a she-devil though," continued Beltoni.

"What a look she gave you!" said the other, who was evidently urging him on for his own amusement.

"So she may, so she may!" replied Beltoni. "Many a waltz, gallop, and country-dance have I made her trip on the greensward by moonlight!"

I pitied from my heart the luckless girl whose evil star had thrown her in Beltoni's way.

"And where did you get acquainted with her, you lucky dog?" continued his companion.

Beltoni acknowledged the compliment by laughing till he held his sides, and then replied,

"At Melle, near Savona," from which town he came.

I pricked up my ears.

"Her brother has a magnificent villa there. Rich people, who live in fine style, but very affable and easy withal."

Heaven and earth! it is she.

"I used to call often there, and stroll about the park with the little gipsy. You ought to have seen her there, my dear fellow—devilish hot weather, she in an easy *négligé*, almost transparent . . . ."

I stop from disgust.

Beltoni continued his description with the gentleness of touch and nicety of expression with which a butcher might praise the victim he is about to kill. A cold perspiration broke on my forehead.

"But, in short, on what terms are you really?" urged Beltoni's interlocutor.

"Ah, ah! you are too inquisitive!" answered he, laughing outright.

"I see how it is," replied the other, "you pretend to be discreet because you have nothing to tell."

"May be, may be. All that I can say is this, that if within a week I do not get a rendezvous from the little witch, why, my name is not Beltoni."

Fantasio's arrival put a stop to the conversation. He came forward to open the blinds of the balcony, and in doing so perceived me; but I had time, by an expressive gesture, to prevent his betraying my presence. Soon after, Beltoni and his friend went away, and I came out of my hiding-place.

"What is the matter?" asked Fantasio, seeing me ashy pale.

"Don't ask just now, you shall know by and by—perhaps to-morrow. Give me a glass of water. Now, good bye," and so saying, I tottered away.

Each syllable of Beltoni's conversation had fallen like a drop of molten lead upon my heart. Each word was graven on my brain in letters of fire. I saw them everywhere, everywhere I heard them, they positively haunted me. Shame, rage, jealousy of the worst kind gnawed at the very core of my heart. "Oh! that I had died before I ever saw her! but I will have vengeance—yes, I will pay her back with interest all that she makes me suffer; but how can I be revenged if she does not love me—if she loves this Beltoni?" I was frantic at the very idea. "To give me Beltoni

for a rival ! !" The mere thought degraded me. I wished him dead and buried. How could that refined fairy-like being listen to such a coarse fellow without disgust ? Was it then true, that the incense of flattery, however gross, is always welcome at the shrine of beauty ?

How I got through the day, I cannot tell. I was in a state of excitement bordering on distraction. Towards evening I recovered some degree of calmness. I had come to the determination to break at once with Lilla. " But she shall know why ; yes, I will write her all that is in my heart." I set myself to the task, but I could not get through it. I threw myself dressed upon my bed, and fell asleep. After some time I awoke, and felt relieved. My blood no longer boiled ; I could now see into the case coolly. Beltoni's statements, or rather vile hints, must of course be exaggerated ; still it was evident that she had encouraged him to a certain degree ; that something like flirtation had been going on between them. This was more than enough. Let us break at once. I was now in a fitting frame of mind to write, so I sat down to my desk and began.

I passed the greater part of the night in writing, and burning what I wrote. I could not accomplish a letter. One was too gentle, another was too harsh. A third pleased me better, but was too long. To what purpose so many explanations ? Three lines ought to suffice. Thus :—" Chance has put me in my turn in possession of a secret of yours. You love another. I have nothing to say to that. The affections are independent of the will. What I might have

a right to reproach you with, is having played a double game with me. But to what end? Farewell. Be happy.—I return your letters and your love-tokens. All is ended between us."

"But is it very sure that she does love this Beltoni? I do not believe it; probably she has only coquetted with him. 'You love another,' says too much. This phrase must be changed. 'You have given another the right to think himself beloved.' No, even that is too much. But why? How do I know that she does not love him? He is fair and rosy, perhaps a handsome fellow in her judgment. Women do not see with our eyes. Positively, my head is too heavy. I will put off writing till to-morrow."

In the meantime, I made a detailed inventory of everything I had received from her, beginning with her letters. I read part of them. I lighted now and then on passages that wrung my heart. A purse, with my initials worked in hair—her own hair!—a gold ring, with a heart transfixed by a dart; a little lock of hair, which she had cut for me; a white handkerchief, that I had once taken from her, wet with her tears; some faded rose leaves—this was all that I had of hers: very little, but to me a treasure! I felt it by the heart-rending pang that came over me in parting with them. I made a packet of the whole, not without tears, and sealed it. "But can I then give up everything? have nothing left of hers, nothing! Impossible!" I broke open the packet, stole half the lock of hair, and then sealed it anew. Morning surprised me thus engaged.

Fantasio was uneasy about me, and called early. I remem-

bered my promise of the day before. Now that all was over, I could tell him the whole. I called Cæsar in, and related to them both every detail of what had passed between Lilla and me, from the first mysterious letter I had received, down to the discovery of the preceding day. I told them how I had made up my mind to break at once with her, and read them the scrawl of the last short note that I had penned. It seemed to both Fantasio and Cæsar that I took the thing too tragically. Lilla, from what I had just told them, must be quite a child, and some indulgence ought to be shewn her. She might have been a little coquettish, but this proved no real liking for Beltoni. If an innocent intercourse, such as the freedom of the country might excuse, had changed its nature, by passing through the impure lips of that fellow, it was not her fault. Beltoni was a puppy and a boaster, and what he said could never be taken seriously. Who knew whether she might not have been playing on his vanity? At all events, the letter I had written was harsh, peremptory, and unfeeling; it would not do. Affairs of this kind should not be conducted in writing; I ought to have a frank and verbal explanation with Lilla, and by its results be guided in my ulterior resolution.

These arguments did not convince me, did not alter my determination to have done with Lilla; but they soothed me. It was such a comfort to hear my friends take up her defence. Well, then, so it should be; I would not write. I would speak with her, and tell her myself what I had on my mind; that would be the best way. Thus also—but

this reason I did not even allow to myself—I should see her once more.

Shortly afterwards, fine weather returned, and there came a letter from Lilla, asking me to go and see her in the garden. I took with me the packet containing her letters, with the other things, and went. It was a beautiful November morning, the sky was pure, the sun warm and pleasant. Lilla was wrapped in a costly fur cloak, and looked radiant. Never had she appeared to me so lovely. What a boor I was, to be sure, to disturb that pure and serene surface!

There was a cloud upon my brow, and she perceived it.

"What is the matter with you?" asked she. I was much at a loss how to broach the subject.

"I have had a bad dream, which troubles me." I hardly knew what I was saying.

"Oh, that is too bad," returned she, laughing heartily; "a serious man, a conspirator like you, to allow himself to be disturbed by a dream, like a child."

"The Greeks and Romans were not children, and yet they attached the greatest importance to dreams. Mine was so like reality, that I still ask myself whether it really was only a dream."

"You make me quite curious," said Lilla, with evident interest; "do tell me your dream."

"Willingly. I dreamt that I stood upon a balcony, concealed from the room within by a blind——"

"As I was in the alcove on Shrove-tuesday," interrupted she, laughing.

"Just so. There were in the room two young men. One of them was confiding his loves to the other. He had made an acquaintance in the country—'a fine *gal*, a little bit of a she-devil, though,' to use his own words. His description of the lady's charms, if wanting in taste, was rich in colouring. 'It was hot weather,' said he, 'and she was in very transparent *négligé*——"

And I repeated word for word Beltoni's expressions. Lilla looked both shocked at what I said, and alarmed at the tone of bitterness with which I said it. I went on—

"The young man had paid his court to the lady, as is customary in the country. He was her partner in the dance on the greensward, her constant attendant in her strolls about the park, and thus had sufficient leisure to see and scan her charms to the best advantage. That this intense admiration had won the lady's heart, is most likely; at least, the young man thought so, for he wound up his narrative with these words:—'If I do not obtain a rendezvous in a week, my name is not my name.'"

"What is the meaning of this odious tale? Why do you tell it to me?" said Lilla, perplexed.

"Don't you guess?" said I, smiling bitterly.

"Not I. You frighten me!" returned she.

"Do I?" and I looked her fully in the face, and said slowly, "Why, are you not the heroine of this odious tale?"

"I!" screamed Lilla, blushing scarlet.

"Yes, you. Beltoni himself told it. He is the happy swain."

Oh! that she had burst into a fit of passion, torn her hair, stamped her foot, flashed scorn and anger from her eyes, cursed that man and me! What a relief it would have been. But no. Her features fell, she looked scared, stunned, annihilated—anything but indignant.

"I may have been wrong," whispered she after a pause; "nay, I see I was. But God is my witness that I do not deserve this. I meant no harm. I do not love that man."

"Have you encouraged him? yes or no!" resumed I. "That is the question."

"He may have supposed so, but I did not mean it. You had been so cross to me, you remember. He was so funny, he amused me. I am but a weak, thoughtless child, and I behaved as such. I have need of indulgence. Did I not write you how much I wanted it?"

"It was your conscience that smote you; you felt at that very moment that you were wronging me."

"Indeed, you are too severe. Such attentions as he paid to me, I saw many girls receive from young men, without any one thinking it amiss."

"What is of little consequence from others, is not so from Beltoni. Do you not know that that man is a profligate? Whatever he touches he defiles."

"Good heavens! how could I know? what can I do?"

"It is not for me to point out your course. As to me, mine is clear. I must bid you farewell."

"What! would you leave me in anger, without one word of forgiveness?"

"I am not angry. I forgive you from my heart, but we must part. Here are your letters."

As she did not move to take them, I laid the packet on a bench close by. "God bless you!" and I moved towards the door of the garden.

A scream from the maid stopped me. I turned my head, and saw Lilla stretched full length upon the ground. I hastened to her. She had fainted. We raised her gently, and carried her into a little green-house near at hand, where we seated her on a bench. The woman went out and fetched some water, with which I sprinkled Lilla's face. It was some time before she recovered consciousness. She then looked around, saw me, sprung up, and flung herself at my feet. Hers was a paroxysm of grief, an agony of despair, which defies all description. Such a passion of tears! such sobs!

"I might crush her under my feet, kill her at once, but not leave her thus. I could not inflict such torture; I could not have the heart to do it, she was sure I could not. I had said so only to try her, was it not so? she was my child; I had called her so many a time: I must be merciful to her."

What could I do? Nothing but yield. I forgave her, raised her, called her my darling child. I took back the packet of letters. I did and said all in my power to calm and soothe the suffering soul. She would not let me go unless I pledged my word that I would meet her on the morrow at the same place; and I pledged it. I succeeded so far as to restore her to something like reason, and went away.

I was satisfied that I had done nothing but what a man

ought to do under such circumstances, and yet, I was not pleased with myself. No; Fantasio and Cæsar might say what they would, I was not pleased with myself.

I saw her next morning, and could judge by her looks what havoc the stormy scene of the preceding day had made in her. I did my best to reassure her, and raise her drooping spirits; I affected a gaiety I was far from feeling, and easily brought back smiles to her lips, and serenity to her countenance. There was such mobility of impression about Lilla that she could cry bitterly and laugh heartily in the course of five minutes.

Things went on between us smoothly enough for some time. Yet I was not happy. My confidence in her I loved was shaken.

CHAPTER XXVII.

FANTASIO'S IMPRISONMENT, OUR HELPLESSNESS AND DESPAIR; NARROW ESCAPE.

THOUGH my confidence in Lilla was shaken, I loved her more than ever. This is a phenomenon of very common occurrence. A disputed possession, precisely because it is disputed, becomes more precious. There are men, for whom a little spice of jealousy is as necessary to love, as mustard is to others for digestion. As for me, I could have done without this ingredient perfectly well; for, if my passion was thereby increased, my comfort was very sensibly diminished. With Lilla's image, upon which my fancy had formerly dwelt with complacent and confident tranquillity, was now associated another importunate figure, whose intrusion turned my satisfaction into uneasiness. The idea of her girlish graces being possibly displayed with pleasure for another than myself, blighted their charm, and made them at certain moments almost hateful to me. In a word, I was jealous; and consequently, in the state of mental mirage which is the characteristic symptom of that strange disease. I was shaken out of this frame of mind as by a thunderbolt.

One night, about twelve o'clock, as I was just going to bed, I heard a voice without which called my name several

times. I opened the window, and asked who was there. "It is I," answered uncle John's voice; "come down, and open the door without making any noise; I want to speak to you." I wondered what could bring uncle John at this hour; he who went to bed so regularly at ten o'clock. I descended, not without some anxiety, and opened the door.

"What is the matter, uncle?"

My uncle did not answer, but took the lamp out of my hand, led the way to my little study, shut the door, and began pacing up and down the room, like a wild beast in its cage. It was not till then that I perceived he was in a state of great anger and agitation.

"What is the matter, uncle?" I repeated.

My question seemed to break the spell that held him dumb.

"What is the matter! what is the matter!" shouted uncle John; "you will soon know what it is, and to your cost too! Did I not tell you that if you would play with the fire, you must burn your fingers? Did I not tell you that all you could do would be to get yourselves hanged? Nothing else, nothing else, nothing else! Confound the boys! they will follow their own way; they all think themselves patterns of wisdom. When they meet a man of sense and experience, who says to them, 'Beware!'—faugh! they spurn his advice, and treat him as a dotard. I have no patience with such fools."

Having uttered this apostrophe with incredible volubility and impetuosity, uncle John flung his hat on the ground in

a rage as a last and clinching argument, threw himself into a chair, and began to bite his nails most furiously.

"In the name of heaven, uncle, do not keep me thus upon the rack. What has happened?"

"Fantasio is arrested, many others are arrested, to say nothing of those who will soon be arrested. Conspiracy, secret societies, high treason, a matter for the gallows, nothing less—this is what has happened! It is said that there is a list of a hundred persons implicated. Yes, a list of a hundred names, and yours among them,—I lay any wager of it. A plague on all boys! They are never happy but when they are in a scrape. What on earth possessed me to prevent this one from becoming a Capuchin!"

Of all this long rigmarole, delivered with ever increasing heat, I had only clearly understood one sentence, which rung in my ears like a death-knell, and froze the blood in my veins, "Fantasio is arrested!" Fantasio arrested meant secret information, a court-martial judging with closed doors, and no defending counsel,—it meant death! The various acts of such a dismal drama passed, like a flash, before my terrified imagination.

"We must save him, uncle; we must save him!" cried I, distractedly.

"Don't talk nonsense!" returned my uncle; "let us do things like rational beings, and think first of saving those who can be saved, beginning by yourself. Let us see; are you in this business, or are you not?"

"For God's sake, uncle, do not think about me. Suppose I am, no one knows it, I hardly know myself."

"Are you sure of what you say?" resumed my uncle, somewhat relieved: "remember this is a matter of life and death, and any reserve may be fatal."

"I tell you, uncle, that it is a hundred to one that Cæsar and I run no risk."

"Cæsar, Cæsar too!" exclaimed uncle John, striking his forehead with both hands. "Of course; Cæsar also! What a fool I was not to have thought of it! Why, this is madness, positive madness. They will never be satisfied till they are all hanged."

"Fantasio, uncle, we must think of Fantasio, of him who is in jeopardy. We must save him at any cost, move heaven and earth, manage his escape from prison!"

"His escape from prison!" ejaculated uncle John with a shrug. "To be sure, with a silken ladder, as in the Barbiere di Siviglia. Upon my word, the boy is crazy. Do you suppose that prisons are made of papier maché, or of pie-crust? Have you ever looked at the tower? Walls ten feet thick, and iron doors—What are you dreaming of?"

"It is said that the strongest door may be opened with a golden key."

"True enough; gold does a great deal, but not everything. First of all, have you two thousand pounds ready? And, suppose you had, do you know to whom to offer them? In the prisons of the tower there are fifty officers and jailors, who spy upon each other. Life is life, my dear fellow. If you would but come down from the clouds, and talk a little common sense!"

"But with your common sense, uncle, you throw one into complete despair."

"I am merely reasonable, and so I say that at this moment there is nothing to be done but—to go to bed. Perhaps your friend's case is not so bad as it might be. We will see by and bye what can be done for him. Depend upon this, everything shall be done which it is humanly possible to do. I say *possible*, you understand. In the mean time, prudence, prudence. Of one misfortune do not let us make two. Good night!"

I had a great mind to awaken Cæsar, but I scrupled to disturb his rest with such bad news. "He will know it but too soon, poor fellow!" I went to bed, but could not close my eyes, and spent the night in thinking over the means of helping our friend. Alas! I positively saw none. Every plan I could devise was only brought to the test to be renounced as impossible.

An escape from prison was surrounded by difficulties insurmountable, or nearly so. First, it was not easy to find the money. My thoughts had turned immediately to Lilla, who was rich and generous; but it was very possible to be both and yet not to have two thousand pounds at immediate command—especially for a woman, and one who had an elder brother. And, supposing the sum were to be found, to whom should we apply? If I had at this moment two thousand pounds in my pocket, what is the first step I ought to take? Must I knock at the gate of the Tower and ask for the head jailor, without knowing anything about him?

And when we shall be face to face what shall I say?—offer him point-blank the money? Even supposing him accessible to corruption, will he not fear some trap? with what confidence can an unknown youth inspire him? Unless I succeed in finding some one who can tell me, with competent knowledge of the fact, "Go to A or B among the officers of the Tower; I know him, he will do anything for money:" unless I can find some such resting point to lean upon—and where find it? it is certain that I shall fail, and get myself into a scrape to boot. Uncle John was right. An escape from prison with the connivance of some one employed in the jail is quite impracticable.

Suppose we were to force the prison, and carry off Fantasio? A hundred, say a hundred and fifty young men constitute the whole of our force, even if the whole number would muster. Where find arms? The Tower is well guarded, and at the gate of the Ducal Palace, a hundred paces distant, there is always a strong military post. Before we can beat down the first door we shall have all the garrison of the town upon us. And, no doubt, there are several doors to be broken open before we reach the apartment where Fantasio is confined. By the way, we ought to know precisely where his cell is. We ought to have an exact plan of the Tower. Alas! how many difficulties! It is astonishing how an enterprise, apparently most simple, changes its nature and grows complicated the moment you come to the details of execution.

By dint of studying this labyrinth, I found however, or at

least I thought I had found, a clue to extricate us. This was my reasoning:—The Carbonari, said I to myself, have adepts everywhere, and surely they must have some among the persons employed in the Tower. Suppose there is only one; that single one is bound by his oath to favour the flight of a brother. If necessary he might be stimulated by a bribe. The problem to be solved is, how to get hold of this Carbonaro jailor. To this end there is but one way, that is, to follow up the chain link by link, from one individual to another, from one grade to another, till we reach some of the high functionaries of the order,—some of those who know everything and every body in it. Once there, we are sure to have the right man pointed out. At all events, there is Lilla's brother, my mysterious initiator, who may be able to give useful directions. Perhaps Cæsar has more of the necessary information than I have. Poor chance of success in such a search, but still the only one left. The more I thought of it, the more satisfactory did the idea appear. Yes; we must set to work in that direction to-morrow, without a moment's further delay.

Early in the morning I awoke Cæsar, and gave him the sad news. I communicated at the same time the plan of which I had bethought myself in the night, and which he warmly approved. It was too early to call on Fantasio's family, so we sat down and compared notes. As for me, I was acquainted with none of our people with the exception of Count Alberto; and all that I knew of him was, that he was an adept, but we were perfect strangers to each other.

Cæsar was exactly in the same plight as to personal acquaintance, but he knew by name two individuals, who, as Fantasio had assured him, belonged to the sect: one a physician, older than ourselves by four or five years, a stiff, haughty looking man, whom I knew by sight, named Pedretti; the other, an old but ardent and most active man named Nasi, the person who was in constant communication with Fantasio, and by him said to be one of the heads of the order. This same Nasi it was who, about a year and a half before, had admitted Fantasio into the sect. His mode of introducing himself to our friend was remarkably eccentric. He called one day, without any previous acquaintance or preparation, and entered upon the matter without further preface, in these words, "I know that you have long desired to be an initiated Carbonaro, and here I am ready to satisfy your wish." It was he also, to all appearance, who had been my brother's initiator a few days later; but of this Cæsar was not sure, as the man was masked. Cæsar had no doubt that Nasi could and would give us all the information we wanted; and this was indeed a consoling piece of intelligence.

We then went to Fantasio's house. He was an only son, fondly loved; and of course we found his parents in deep consternation. We tried to comfort them as we best could. They told us that on the preceding evening Fantasio had just returned home as usual about eleven o'clock, when a party of carabineers, with a commissary of police at their head, had come and carried him off. His papers had been searched, and some, but of no paramount importance, taken away.

We entered our friend's room with an inexpressible oppression of heart. All was as he had left it: a volume of Lord Byron still open upon his desk, an unfinished cigar upon the table, and near it a sheet of paper with some scattered thoughts suggested by the poem he had been reading. Everything was as yesterday, and yet what a difference! All around had a look of desolation. Those who have had to part from dear friends know how deeply and painfully inanimate objects associated with them strike home to the heart!

It had been agreed with uncle John that I should call on him about dinner-time to hear the news. To him, then, we went. He knew all the details of the affair. The number of persons arrested was ten; he had noted down their names, their calling, and their ages. There were eight young men from twenty to thirty, (Sforza was of the number,) most of them lawyers, and two old gentlemen, a noted barrister, and —Nasi! The very man we depended upon!—our anchor of hope! what a blow! Cæsar and I looked at each other in silent despair. What was to be done? Try our chance at once with Dr. Pedretti. As I knew him by sight, it was agreed that I should go. I had no difficulty in finding his address, and I went immediately.

Dr. Pedretti was one of those men who never have been young—he might have been five and twenty, or he might have been fifty. He wore a dirty-white cravat, a dirty frill, had a nose always crammed with snuff, and looked big and self-important. "What procured him the honour of my visit?" I told him at once. He started, and stammered

that I was quite mistaken in him. I replied that I was sure of what I said, and that dissembling was of no use. I was a brother and not a spy, and gave him the signs of recognition. The man was taken by surprise, and no longer attempted to deny the fact; but he turned as pale as death, went to the door, and ascertaining that there was no one there, came back and whispered in my ear that *segregation* was for the present the watchword of the order, which meant immediate and absolute suspension of all communication between the *good cousins;* that he could not take upon himself to infringe the command by giving the information I requested. All prayers and entreaties failed against an adamantine discretion, which was probably a mere veil meant to conceal his own state of isolation, and so save his vanity. Dr. Pedretti has never forgiven me the fright I caused him.

The only person who now remained to be tried was Count Alberto, our last hope, and we did not hesitate one moment. Cæsar and Fantasio had never seen Count Alberto's face, nor he theirs, although the reader may remember that they had been present at my initiation at his house. It was Nasi, the soul of the Association, it would seem, who, through Count Alberto and Fantasio, to both of whom he was known, had put in momentary contact the two couples of masked dominoes—Count Alberto and his secretary on one hand, Cæsar and Fantasio on the other, but with a strict prohibition to each couple against questioning the other, or making themselves mutually known.

Cæsar took upon himself the task of seeing Count Alberto.

For still greater precaution, and in order not to run the risk of startling him by calling at his own house, we agreed that I should learn some particulars respecting his habits, so as to know where he might be met with out of his own home. I made inquiries of Lilla on the subject, and she told me of a certain *caffé*, where her brother went almost every day to read the papers at a certain hour. I must render justice to Lilla, who proved on this occasion, as I had expected, generous and warm-hearted. She offered me not only all the ready money she possessed, but a quantity of useless trinkets as she called them, which might be sold at once to realize a handsome sum ; and, moreover, engaged to raise any sum I would name, within a given time.

Cæsar saw Count Alberto, and met with a cordial, confiding, and open-hearted reception. He was full of readiness to serve his imprisoned associates ; but he was in the same case with ourselves, that is to say, he was now, since the arrest of Nasi, perfectly isolated ; his secretary, also a Carbonaro—the short domino attired as a woman—knew no one but him. All he could say was, that if certain hints thrown out by Nasi could be depended upon, and he thought they might, two gentlemen, whom he named, filled important posts in the order. One of them was very high in the magistracy, and noted for his harshness. The other was a foreign official agent from a small German principality.

This information was so vague that we hesitated ; but prudence is not the virtue of youth, and after some hesitation we determined to clear up the point. Of the two persons

mentioned we agreed rather to try the second; and Cæsar insisted upon undertaking this more than delicate mission. He presented himself at the gentleman's house, and was admitted. While excusing himself for his intrusion, he repeatedly made the signs of recognition, but in vain; he then went straight to the subject. The old gentleman stopped him at the first word, and said that it would be his duty to call in the guard, and give such a visitor into custody; and that, if he did not do so, it was from respect for the honourable family to which Cæsar belonged. At the same time he motioned him to the door.

This failure took from us all courage to venture on any further experiment of the kind. We felt that, without being able to serve Fantasio, we should end by getting ourselves into some very serious difficulty, and so desisted.

Did these two gentlemen named by Count Alberto belong to the Association, or did they not? That is what I do not know, and never shall, for both are dead, and Nasi also. Supposing they did, it may be reasonably imagined that they did not choose to leave their secret at the mercy of mere youths, and I cannot say that in that they were much to blame. The Association of Carbonari, at least in Piedmont, was chiefly composed of Free-masons and of some Carbonari belonging to 1821, spared by the political storms of that time. They were all old men, or at least men of mature age and experience, and likely rather to sin by excess than by deficiency of prudence. Carbonarism composed of such elements would naturally look more to the quality than to the quantity of adepts, and we

may be allowed to suppose that their number was limited. That the Carbonari were very distrustful of youth was a fact proved by the immense difficulty we had had in almost forcing ourselves upon them. Having once admitted us, their aim was to keep us isolated, so that, even had we wished it, we should have found it impossible to commit any great imprudence, and thus compromise the Association. In this they had too well succeeded—we were enclosed within an impassable circle—whichever way we turned we met an iron wall. Nor was our utter inability to help our friends the sole cause of our depression of spirit. No time, for a long succession of years, had been so full of hope and promise as the present; none seemed more favourable for down-trodden nationalities to raise their head and assert their rights. Belgium had just achieved her independence, heroic Poland was in arms, Bologna and the Legations were in open insurrection, Modena had risen; the Revolution was at our very door—and we were bound hand and foot, and could do nothing for ourselves. This it was which galled us to the quick. We were in despair.

Fantasio's imprisonment had lasted a month, and his parents had in vain solicited permission to visit him. It had been refused point-blank. They were wealthy and influential people, and made use of all their connexions to obtain, in behalf of their son, the interest of persons in high situations, and even holding places about the Court. Meanwhile the proceedings with respect to the prisoners were being carried out with the greatest secrecy, and nothing was known to

the public. The most alarming rumours were in circulation through the town. Reports were afloat of chests of arms discovered, of written plans of insurrection seized. Some even talked of capital condemnations and secret executions. There was evidently exaggeration in all, and absurdity in some of these assertions; but still they kept the public mind in a state of excitement which could not but tell upon us.

Fortunately uncle John, in his quiet but indefatigable way, found means to ascertain the real state of affairs, and was soon able to reassure us, at least to a certain extent. He was on intimate terms with an old magistrate, to whom he had once had an opportunity of rendering important pecuniary service, and who, contrary to custom in such cases, had retained a sense of gratitude. Now, chance would have it that this same magistrate was charged with the preparatory proceedings in the affair of Fantasio and his co-accused, and had it in his power to give uncle John all the desired information, of course under condition of the strictest secrecy.

Fantasio was incriminated for being one of the society of Carbonari, and for having on a certain day, and in a certain place, received as member of the said society a certain individual. This individual turned out to be an agent of the police, and was the informer against Fantasio. Nasi was charged by the same police agent with belonging to the sect, and with having put him in communication with Fantasio, for the well understood purpose of his being received

as a Carbonaro. The remainder of the accused were simply prosecuted as belonging to the sect of Carbonari. How it was that Sforza, who had just been admitted, should have been already tracked, I cannot say; but I know that there was some talk at the time of a certain written list of names which had been seized. However this may be, one favourable circumstance for Nasi and Fantasio was, that their accusation rested upon the testimony of a single individual—the police agent. This in itself would have been sufficient to obtain their acquittal before an ordinary tribunal, according to the maxim of jurisprudence, that one witness does not constitute legal evidence, *unus nullus;* but before a court-martial, or even before a civil court, named *ad hoc*, as was often the case, single evidence would have been received, and their condemnation was a moral certainty. Their salvation or destruction hung, therefore, by a thread, namely, the choice of the court before which they should be brought.

Charles Felix, then upon the throne, hearing that a prosecution was going on against some Carbonari, was seized with a childish curiosity about the matter, and desired his Minister of Grace and Justice (as we have it) to lay a report of the business before him. Happily the king had a smattering of jurisprudence, of which he liked to make a show, and a taste for legal forms. It was even said that in his youth he had studied law, and been received LL.D. On examining the documents, the circumstance of there being only a single witness did not escape his observation, and he felt scruples on the subject. To remove them he named a commission of

three learned and eminent magistrates, charged to examine the documents, and to decide whether there was ground for prosecution, and if so, to determine before what court the trial ought to proceed. To this measure Fantasio and the others owed their salvation. The commission, after long examination and consideration, pronounced that there was no ground for proceeding against the prisoners. The logical consequence of this decision would have been their immediate discharge; not so, however. The government, whose fate it seemed to be never to carry through a completely good measure, only did half justice. Fantasio and Nasi received passports, with an order to leave the country, without any defined period of time being named. Their co-accused were set at liberty, but placed under the superintendence of the police. The process occupied about four months. It was generally believed, upon what grounds I cannot say, that one of the eminent magistrates forming the above named commission, was a Carbonaro.

This favourable issue to what might have proved fatal to our friend, threw us into actual transports of joy, transports which were too soon allayed by the arbitrary measure which followed immediately afterwards. Still we knew what a narrow escape he had made, and felt very thankful. To conform to the wish of Fantasio's family, which it was our duty to respect, Cæsar and I saw him only for a few minutes before he set out in the Diligence. The moment of separation was heart-breaking, and on neither side could we refrain from tears. "Be of good heart; keep up the sacred fire, and love

me still. You shall soon hear from me;"—such were his last words to us. The postilion cracked his whip, the huge machine rolled off, and we walked homewards with full hearts, and in a state of depression we had never before experienced.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE CASACCIA RUPTURE; THE LETTER RETURNED; LILLA BECOMES OUTRAGEOUS.

WHAT a difference in one's life may the absence of one person make! Days and weeks wore on and still we could not console ourselves for the loss of Fantasio. We missed him every moment. His little apartment was as a haven, of which long habit had made for us, at certain hours, a sweet necessity, and where we were sure of finding welcome, sympathy, and consolation in all our vexations, great or small. Deprived of this resting-place we drifted like vessels without a rudder. The buoyancy of our friend, and his activity of mind, had exercised, unknown to ourselves, a vivifying action upon us, calling forth all our energies. This stimulus removed, we sank to half our former value. Nor were Cæsar and I—the bosom friends of Fantasio—the only individuals who experienced this species of aimlessness; Alfred, the Prince, Sforza—now restored to liberty—in a word, the whole circle of our common friends, felt it no less than we did; and in spite of Fantasio's injunction to keep up the sacred fire, the work of propagandism, which had busied us till then, seemed to have come to a stand-still. It was as if each had said to himself, "of what use is it, now that Fantasio is no longer here?"

The unwilling traveller wrote regularly to his parents, who always gave us news of him. He was well in health and spirits. In every letter there was some affectionate message for "the two brothers," as he called us, but no direct communication. The latest news was that he had been travelling in Switzerland, and was struck with admiration of that grand and beautiful country; and that he had a mind soon to visit Paris.

What with bad weather and Fantasio's imprisonment I had scarcely seen Lilla during the winter, and since the return of the fine season, she, on her part, had been detained in attendance on the sick-bed of an aged aunt, who was confined by serious illness. The old lady doated on her niece, and could not spare her for a moment. We corresponded occasionally, and I remarked that Lilla bore with more equanimity than might have been expected from her temper, the constraint occasioned by this circumstance.

One fine morning in June—it was the 3d, I remember it well, for two days later would have been the anniversary of my first meeting with Lilla—I went out to walk. As it was Sunday, the unusual liveliness of Strada Nuova, through which I passed, and the uncommon number of loungers there, did not at first strike me. But as I proceeded, the throng thickened more and more, and in certain places near the square of the Fontane Amorose, I found the street entirely blocked up, and could proceed no further. At the same time, I heard a merry band of music coming towards the spot where I stood. I asked some one what was going forward.

" The *Casaccia*," was the reply ; " the *Black* is coming out." As I had never seen this procession of the Casaccia, of which I had heard a great deal, I determined to take this opportunity of satisfying my curiosity, and to make one of the expecting crowd.

The origin of the Casaccia (from casa, house) is very ancient. The porters in Genoa used formerly to be divided into different corporations, having each its own customs, privileges, and place of worship. One or more of these corporations had united, and formed what was called a brotherhood or confraternity, the chief object of which was social prayer. In fact, early in the morning on Sundays and feast-days, all the members of one brotherhood would meet in some church or chapel appointed for their special use, to hear mass and a sermon. The expense of the worship, and the salary of the priests officiating in the church or chapel, (oratorio, as it is called,) were defrayed by a small monthly subscription from each member of the brotherhood.

There were in my time two principal confraternities, that of the "Fucine," (Forges,) and that of the "Marina," (Marine,) both of them numerous and rich, and consequently rivals. These two confraternities went more commonly by the respective names of Black and White, from the image of our Saviour, which was black in the Chapel of the Fucine, and white in that of the Marina. The White and the Black looked upon each other with feelings of jealousy and rivalry, which the Government, true to the old adage, *divide et impera*, far from discouraging, countenanced and fomented. This

spirit of emulation displayed itself especially on the occasion of certain processions held by the two establishments at particular seasons. Each exerted itself to the utmost to outshine the other. If the White came forth with a new standard, (gonfalone,) and wax tapers weighing a pound each, the Black were sure, on their next appearance, to have wax tapers of two pounds' weight, and a banner twice as large. On one occasion, the White had shewn themselves with silk, instead of linen robes; the Black, in their turn, appeared in robes of velvet. In short, by degrees they had come on both sides to the display of unbounded luxury. Gentlemen of fortune had adopted one or other of the establishments, giving large sums of money in proof of their patronage, nay, sometimes going so far as to ruin themselves in that amusement. These gentlemen, called Protectors, obtained the distinguished privilege of being allowed to carry either the white or the black crucifix. This honour was sought after with extravagant eagerness, and often very dearly paid for. There is no disputing about tastes. What religion gained by these shows, I know not. Of course, they gave rise to much drinking, much swearing, and much quarrelling.

On this particular occasion, expectation had been on tiptoe about the procession of the Black, and it is but fair to say that the reality exceeded all anticipation. Nothing richer or more magnificent can be imagined. The hooded robes were of various-coloured velvet—real Genoa velvet, embroidered with gold and silver. Those of the four very tall men who headed the procession, and bore massive silver rods, were of

crimson velvet, so loaded with gold, that the wearers bent under the weight. Each of these robes was estimated to be worth two hundred pounds. The least costly were of thirty pounds' value. Each individual in the procession held in his hand a large waxen torch lighted, and it might be literally said that torrents of wax flowed on all sides. There were four large crosses of most costly materials; one of mother-of-pearl tipped with massive gold, one of tortoise-shell with massive silver, a third of ebony inlaid with gold, and with tips of the same precious metal; and lastly, a fourth, not only tipped, but covered all over with chased silver plates. Each cross had its band of music. That which preceded the crucifix numbered sixty musicians. This cross had tips of massive gold, whence depended clusters of grapes, and bunches of ears of corn of the same metal, and of the most exquisite workmanship. The I.N.R.I. was composed entirely of diamonds. A child on horseback, representing, I believe, St. John the Baptist—to what purpose or end I do not know—was clad in a golden tunic, wonderfully imitating a sheep-skin, and the housings of the horse were resplendent with gold and jewels. Gold, always gold—gold on everything and everywhere. The splendour and the richness became really sickening. The procession closed with a large gold and silver reliquary, containing I know not what relics, and carried by twenty bearers, marching with measured step.

The procession was long, and proceeded slowly, so that it took some hours to pass by. The windows of the houses on its line of march were ornamented with draperies of various

colours, most of them red, and were crowded with spectators, who testified their satisfaction by scattering flowers in handfuls. I had had quite enough of the sight, and was just about to elbow my way out of the crowd, when my attention was arrested by a most graceful picture.

At one of the casements of a first story, there sat a young person with her girlish curling head thrown backward, seemingly in deprecation of a large red hand, full of flowers, and held high in threatening show of hurling them down upon her. The attitude of the young girl was charming, full of unstudied grace. The face of the owner of the hand, who stood a little behind, was hidden by this youthful head, which presently moved a little aside, and discovered to view the man—Beltoni! Almost at the same instant, the little head resumed its natural position, and looked down. It was Lilla! Our eyes met half-way, and she retreated hastily. I felt as if a dagger had pierced my heart. I darted through the crowd like a madman, and rushed home. The little packet of Lilla's letters and keepsakes lay in a drawer, still carefully tied up and sealed, as I had brought it back seven months before. I took it out, and as it was not addressed, I wrote, in my very best hand, "To La Signora Marchesa d'Anfo, 3d June, one o'clock in the afternoon. *To be delivered immediately.*" I put the packet into my pocket, and went full speed to my old friend the gardener. Fortunately, a nephew of his, a lad of fourteen, happened to be at home. I took the boy with me, and led the way to Lilla's house. I directed the lad to go upstairs, and leave the little parcel

with her maid, and so he did. Lilla was not yet come home. How fortunate! I had been able to manage the whole thing within an hour. "She will see at least that I did not hesitate," thought I. I put into the boy's hand a sum of money that made him stare, and a quarter of an hour afterwards, I was in my own room again. The excitement that had kept me up till then was over, and I felt sick at heart, lonely—miserable beyond expression. I threw myself upon a sofa, hid my head among the cushions to stifle my sobs, and wept like a child.

When I raised my head, Santina was standing by my side. I was both angry and ashamed at her intrusion. "What business have you here? why do you come spying after me?"

Santina begged my pardon, and stammered that she was afraid I was unwell.

"In future, pray, have no such fears," said I, "and be less inquisitive. Begone!" Much mortified, she moved towards the door.

In Italy servants are considered as forming a part of the family, and are allowed a degree of familiarity which would shock English habits, and which, in Santina's case, particularly with respect to myself, was augmented by the circumstance of my having taught her to read and write. I felt I had been too harsh, and I called her back.

"Now don't look so; Santina, I know that you are a good girl and mean no harm."

"I cannot bear to see you in this way," she replied with a sob. It was now my turn to comfort her.

"Never mind, Santina, it will not kill me. It will soon be over."

"I wish I had burnt that letter. I wish I knew the lady," said Santina, with concentrated passion.

"What letter? what lady?"

"That letter in a lady's hand-writing that I gave you fourteen months ago."

"And on account of which, I suppose, you have been so cross to me ever since."

"My heart told me that that letter would bring you unhappiness."

"Perhaps you have guessed right. You have a wonderful memory, child. Should you know that hand-writing again?"

"Yes, I should know that writing among a thousand."

"Well, if there come any letters in the same hand, you must return them, and say it is by my order."

Santina's features brightened. "Depend upon me; I shall take good care."

And she did take good care, with a zeal beyond praise. There came a letter next day; there came several the following days. All were pitilessly refused. The moment Santina heard the bell, she would rush to the door, and a week afterwards when we went into the country, she insisted on being left in town, lest in her absence my orders should be eluded; and did not join us at San Secondo till a month later.

How much was San Secondo altered! It hardly seemed to be the same place I had known in the preceding years. The green of the country had lost its freshness, the very air

was less clear. Fantasio was not there, and alas! that bright image, which had illumined all without and within me, was darkened. There, on the slope of the hill, rose that same white cottage with its green blinds, the mere sight of which in former times was a joy to my eyes. How sadly altered it looked now, how empty and how cheerless! although the open blinds assured us of its being still inhabited.

I had spent three months at San Secondo, three long disconsolate months of dreary void, regret, and painful dwelling on the past. Each day I had said—and repeated to myself over and over again—that Lilla had never loved me; that the young enthusiastic conspirator might have struck her fancy, but had never touched her heart; that there was between her and me complete incompatibility of temper, of feeling, of judgment, and of habits. In short, I had so far succeeded, as to work myself into comparative peace of mind —that dull heavy peace of mind which springs from very hopelessness, and is dearly bought by the loss of long cherished illusions—when a letter from Lilla, after more than two months' silence, made its way to me, and upset me altogether.

The hand-writing of this letter had been so cleverly disguised, that Santina herself had handed it to me. I had opened it without the least suspicion, and—I was weak enough to read it. Lilla treated me with great haughtiness. She was indignant at what she styled my want of breeding and good manners. She had left me time enough for con-

sideration, but to no avail. She must, once for all, tell me what she had in her mind. To do so she had been obliged to have recourse to a stratagem, that her letter might reach my hands; I might, however, be quite easy, she would not disturb me in future. What she had to say was this:—that she was not the dupe of the *pretext* which I had taken to break with her. She had long perceived that I meditated deserting her. I was quite free to do so, *she would try to console herself;* but she owed it to herself to tell me, that the manner in which I had brought about the rupture was mean, cowardly, odious, unworthy of a gentleman, etc., etc. The letter ended by hinting mysteriously at my new loves, in which she wished me much happiness."

This letter reopened all my wounds, and threw me into a fever. That she should represent herself as irreproachable, and cast all the blame on me! that she should stand forth as a victim, after all she had made me suffer! This was more than I could bear. Under the first impulse I framed an answer, such as, I thank God to the present day, I did not send. "Had I not better seek an interview and overwhelm her with my indignation?" Many hours did I spend in the most painful uncertainty, as to what was best for me to do. At last I determined on the only course that appeared to me, and that really was, reasonable and dignified. I inclosed Lilla's letter under cover, and sent it back to her address *without one word.* Yet in that letter, under which I had smarted, there was a drop of comfort. Lilla was jealous; and I confess to my shame, that my heart thrilled

with delight at the thought. Jealous of whom? Most likely of Santina. Lilla's maid had brought some of her mistress's letters, and had been spoken to by Santina. Now Santina, though rather strange looking, was a pretty girl; and the determination and quickness with which she had executed my orders, might easily have led both the maid and the mistress into a belief that she had some selfish motive of her own, in preventing the letters from reaching their destination.

I have already said, that in front of the house in which we lived at San Secondo there was a meadow, extending to the edge of the torrent. A little to the right, perhaps two hundred paces from the house, stood a copse, the only trees that broke the uniformity of level green, and under the shade of which I had a habit of sitting to read or meditate. I had remarked that, in the heat of the day, this little wood was the resort of many birds, especially of thrushes and blackbirds, which came to seek the cool shade. I had caused a thatched shed to be erected at the foot of one of the largest trees, just high enough for me to stand in it; and thence, sheltered from the sun, and the sharp eyes of the feathered race, I shot at them with certain aim. The hut was in sight of the house, and within call, and I used always to go there some time before the hour of meals, and remain till called. On the day following that on which I had sent back Lilla's letter, I went as usual to this hiding place, and as I was just about creeping into it, who should come forth but—Lilla herself.

"Here you are at last," said she. "I have been watching and waiting for you these two hours."

I was so astonished, so petrified, that I could not find a word to say.

"You little expected," pursued she bitterly, "that I should one day make use of your lively description of this valley, and of what you used to call your *oasis in the desert*, to come and surprise you—not very agreeably, as it appears."

"If you wished to surprise me, I confess, you have succeeded most completely. Agreeably it can scarcely be. The step you have taken is so imprudent, so rash—we may be seen from every side."

Lilla's lip curled.

"You are afraid I should injure my reputation? How extremely considerate you have all at once become! You were less so when we used to meet every day in the garden."

We were within sight of the house, and I urged the necessity of retiring to a less exposed situation. She little cared, she said, who saw her or who did not. However, I prevailed upon her to follow me a little further on, beyond a row of trees. She wore a riding-habit, and held a riding-whip in her hand. Her face was pale, her lips white and contracted. As she did not speak, I broke the silence.

"I regret to see you here, because I fear, nay, I am sure, that no good can come of this meeting. However, here I am, ready to listen to anything you may have to say."

"You have a quiet, cool, unobtrusive way, quite a way of

your own of saying and *doing* sharp things, that makes one's blood boil."

I saw that she was working herself into a passion, and stood silent. There was a pause.

"But yesterday," she broke out, "you sent me back a letter that I had written to you. What right have you to deal by me in this manner? By what right do you treat me with such contempt and scorn?"

"You attribute to me feelings and intentions which I have not, and against which I protest. I wish to say nothing that can hurt you; but allow me to observe, that if, in a moment of passion, I were to write a letter unfounded in fact and extravagant in expression, I should feel glad and thankful that such a letter were returned to me."

She coloured to the eyes.

"Suppose the letter were such as you say, why not set the writer right as to unfounded facts? why not resent the extravagant expressions? why not act, in a word, like a man who has warm blood in his veins, and not like a ——," she hesitated a moment for an expression, "and not like a coward?"

I smarted under the lash, but said with forced calmness,— "You know very well that you do not believe what you say."

She never stopped to listen to me, but went on vehemently:—

"What outrages, intentional, premeditated outrages, you have heaped upon me! Deny it if you dare!"

"I do most positively deny it."

"What then do you call returning my letters and my keepsakes without one word of explanation ?"

"You forget that there was a date affixed to the packet of your letters and keepsakes, a date which in itself ought to have been an all-sufficient explanation."

"Your date," replied Lilla, biting her lips, "was nothing but gratuitous insolence, and of a piece with your capricious and unmanly conduct towards me. What, in heaven's name, was my great crime, that I should be treated as if I were the most degraded of my sex ?"

Every nerve in my frame thrilled with indignation at the recollection of the scene at the window, and of all I had since endured ; but I commanded myself, and answered calmly,—

"Pray do not let us condescend to recriminate as to the past. Let us rather learn a lesson from it. We have made an experiment. We were but two children, we knew little of each other, little of ourselves. Time has brought to view differences of feeling and habits which are so incompatible—in short, the experiment has failed. Let us make up our minds to the truth.—You have never loved me."

"Perhaps not," interrupted Lilla bluntly, "I do not know. But this I know," continued she warmly, "that since ——," she stopped, then suddenly changing her tone,—

"We must be friends, or enemies to the very death. Choose !"

"My choice is already made," said I, breathing more freely ; "let us be friends, and part in peace."

"Not so, not part! Be once more to me what you were in former times."

"That I cannot, that I never shall be," was my hasty reply.

"*Never*, did you say?" and she shook, as with an ague, from head to foot.

I did not repeat the word, but made a gesture that meant as much.

"Well, then! let us be enemies, and act as such. I must have your life, or you mine!"

So saying, she drew out of the pocket of her riding-dress two small pistols, and offered one to me.

"Why this is noon-day madness," cried I, almost smiling, as I took the pistol and threw it to the ground; "you may shoot at me, if it gratifies you, but I shall never lift my little finger against a woman."

"A woman! how generous!" sneered she. "How well that look of *manly* superiority becomes you!"

Then breaking off in a burst of rage:

"Yes, a woman, a mortally offended woman, who demands reparation; do you hear? have you no spark of honour left?"

I stood immovable. I saw she was on the point of striking me with her riding-whip, but I did not move.

"Oh! that I were a man!" and she flung the pistol she held to the ground.

"I wish you were!" muttered I.

"Do you?" retorted she. "I take note of the wish, and you shall remember it some day;" and she turned away.

She had not taken ten steps when Santina's voice was heard at a little distance, calling me by name. Lilla came back, and said, laughing hysterically,—

"Is that your black-a-moor? I must see her."

"You shall not," said I.

"Are you afraid that I shall kill her?"

"You mean to give offence to a poor innocent girl, who never did you any harm," said I; "that is what I fear, and shall not permit."

Still Lilla persisted, and strove to push me aside. What could I do?—to prevent mischief I had no other means but to call to Santina that I was coming, and desire her to go back, while I took both of Lilla's hands, and held them, till I saw Santina re-enter the house. I then set Lilla free, and said,—

"I beg pardon for the violence I have offered. You will thank me one day for having prevented you from committing an act unworthy of you."

"Pitiful wretch!" said she in a hoarse voice, "your account with me is heavy, but a day of reckoning will come; take my word for that." So saying she turned away.

For my part, I returned to the house in a state of agitation more easy to imagine than to describe.



CHAPTER XXIX.

INTRODUCES THE READER TO A QUEER MARKET; A FUSSY LITTLE MAN, AND A LETTER FROM FANTASIO.

THE scene I have just depicted left behind it a deep and most painful impression. That Lilla was wilful and passionate, I knew of old; but that she would allow herself to be carried away to a pitch of violence such as I had just witnessed, was what I never would have believed. I now felt that she was a woman capable of putting her threats into execution, and of bringing me into some serious scrape. Suppose she were to irritate her brother's mind against me! This supposition, and the unpleasant consequences to which it might possibly lead if it were ever realized, gave me pain and annoyance; for, without personally knowing Count Alberto, I had a high esteem, and even friendship for him. These thoughts kept me long, and considerably uneasy; but as time wore on without bringing any untoward incident, my mind reverted to them less frequently; though still, at intervals, they would recur in their pristine intensity, and Lilla's parting words and accent would ring in my ears like an echo of evil presage.

I had resumed my usual course of life, spending the morning hours till mid-day at home, from twelve o'clock till two

in the chambers of the old barrister under whom I was nominally studying law, and in the evening taking long walks with Cæsar and Alfred. My habits were even more retired than ever, and, with the exception of the Prince—who had just returned from a journey to Naples, of Sforza, and some other intimate friends, who came to our house almost daily, I saw no one.

By this time we had partly recovered from the stupor of discouragement into which we had been thrown by the departure of Fantasio, and had begun to look about us again. This was chiefly owing to Cæsar, the energy and superiority of whose character was naturally assuring to him a complete ascendency over the whole youthful set, for a time dispersed and disheartened, but now, with new courage and spirit, rallying round him as their leader. If any one among us was able to fill the void left by Fantasio, beyond a doubt it was Cæsar. He was as noble a fellow as ever trod the earth; his was a lofty mind, and a heart of gold. Alas! I may be allowed to render him justice now, though he was my brother. It is a privilege for which, God knows, I have paid dearly enough. Fantasio had always rated him far above all the rest of us; and, while entertaining a sincere affection for me, he loved Cæsar still better, and held him also in higher estimation. I knew this, but was not jealous; on the contrary, my pride in Cæsar found gratification in the preference shewn for him.

My father made a great fuss about getting me clients, and would often ask whether such or such a person had not come

to consult me. "Nobody had come." This negative answer never failed to provoke him; and by dint of searching his brains, he at last ferretted out a supposed cause for my lack of practice. "I had no fixed hours for receiving clients. A man of business should certainly stick to his chambers, so as to be found there at any moment." Truly, I did not see how sitting in my room was to exercise a magnetic attraction on clients; but, for the sake of peace at home, I yielded the point, and took to the habit of spending the morning in my little study.

One day in December, while I was there as usual, smoking away the time, I heard, to my no little surprise, the door of the small lobby that led to my sanctum pushed open. Was this my first client? Presently there came a knock at the inner door. I instantly threw away my cigar, assumed as grave a look as I could on so short a notice, and desired the person to come in. As nobody appeared, though I repeated the invitation several times, I went to the door, and found standing there a middle-aged, sun-burnt sailor, who handed me a letter.

This epistle informed me that a Life Insurance Company had just been set up at Marseilles, and wished to establish a corresponding house in Genoa; that the writer, agent for the aforesaid Company, had been directed to apply to me, as a person probably both willing and able to forward the undertaking; and that the undersigned would be happy to give me a meeting, and talk the matter over next morning at twelve, if it should suit my engagements to be at that hour

at the Loggia of Banchi—in the covered Exchange, on the side facing Via degli Orefici—Goldsmith's Street.

Such was the substance of the letter, interspersed with various expressions highly complimentary to me, and not a few faults in spelling. It was signed "Lazzarino."

"And who is Signor Lazzarino?" said I to the bearer. The man, for sole answer, carried his hands first to his ears, then to his mouth, shaking his head. This pantomime clearly meant that he was deaf and dumb. An odd letter, thought I, and a queer messenger, not likely to sin in the way of indiscretion.

There evidently lurked some mystery in this invitation. Could it come from Lilla? It was very improbable that, if she had any motive for wishing to see me, she would appoint the most crowded part of the town as trysting-place. The mention of Marseilles, where I knew Fantasio to be, suggested rather the idea, that the purpose of this mysterious rendezvous might be to communicate some message from him. At all events, the only way of clearing up the matter was to go to the place appointed; and next morning, accordingly, a little before twelve o'clock, I was in the Loggia of Banchi, walking up and down the side that faces Via degli Orefici.

During this perambulation, I was struck with surprise at the great number of priests assembled in this spot, some standing in groups, some sitting on chairs and benches, some walking up and down, as I myself was doing. One of these last, after having eyed me attentively, muttered, as he passed, some words evidently addressed to me, but the meaning of

which I could not catch. Could he be my man? Under this impression, I managed to pass very near him on my first turn, when he again spoke to me. This time I did not lose a word of what he said. "Any masses, Sir? very cheap." I could make nothing of it; and he, no doubt, seeing as much by the blank hesitation of my countenance, turned and walked away. It was not till some time afterwards, that by inquiry and personal observation, I came to learn the meaning of this priest's words, and the motive which brought so many of his brethren to that place. While Lazzarino keeps us waiting, I may as well impart to the reader my information on the subject.

There is scarcely any man so destitute as to die without leaving something to pay for a certain number of masses for the benefit of his soul, or hardly any poor woman who has not, from time to time, some masses performed, either for the soul of a deceased relative, for the cure of some sick member of her family, or for some such object. The sale of masses, therefore, is very considerable in Italy. I purposely say the *sale*, for the mass is paid for, and forms an essential part of a priest's income. The price varies according to the demand, exactly like the price of stocks, and, like them, masses rise or fall with the greater or less supply in the market.

The spot where this singular exchange was held, where the price of masses was regulated, and all transactions relative to this odd species of merchandise took place, was precisely the Loggia of Banchi, on the side facing Goldsmith's Street.

If it was your wish to have a mass said immediately, or if you had an investment of five hundred masses to make, you could find what you wanted in this place. Brokers (priests of course) came to meet you and made the bargain. Suppose a priest, who had some hundreds of masses to say, to be in want of ready money, he found there these said brokers, who took the masses at a discount, and paid him the difference. Some of the big-wigs—Rothschilds of this Exchange—had in their pocket-books thousands and thousands of masses. These men monopolized the ware at a good price, and then got rid of it at a profit to poor priests, their clients, (especially to those from the country,) and thus realized considerable gains.

This sale of masses sometimes gave rise to very ludicrous scenes. I have frequented the place often enough to witness a great variety of such. I shall merely note the following:—

A livery-servant, sent by his master, from Albaro, a large village at a few miles' distance, was bargaining with a priest for a mass to be celebrated at the said place. The servant had been authorized to bid as much as three francs; but it was Sunday, the weather was bad, and there were but few priests at leisure. The merchandise was looking up.

"I won't stir for less than five francs," says the priest, turning away as if to break off the conference.

"Five francs! That is unconscionable," returned the servant; "why, one might get a *Novena** for that!"

* A religious service performed nine days running—as saleable an article as the mass.

"Well, then, get your *Novena*, but you shall not have a mass."

The priest crossed the street, and entered a liquor shop.

"Boy, a glass of brandy!" said he to the lad behind the counter.

The servant, who followed close at the priest's heels, turned pale. If the priest should break his fast, farewell to all hope of a mass.

"I'll give four francs, though I am sure I shall be scolded."

"Five francs! that's my first and last word,"—raising the glass to his lips, "you may take it or leave it as you please."

He was just on the point of swallowing the contents, when the servant stopped his hand, saying,

"You drive a very hard bargain; however, you shall have the five francs:" and so it was settled.

To return to our subject. I had made half a dozen false physiognomic judgments, when a little fellow, young and slender, brushing hurriedly past, let fall these words in my ear—"Mum! Follow me—Lazzarino," and he sauntered away, I keeping at his heels. He was dressed in smart sailor's attire, glazed hat, blue jacket and trousers, red sash round his waist, and his very black hair dangling in twisted cork-screw curls on each side of his face.

My conductor must have had an innate horror of the straight line, and an equal predilection for a crooked one, to lead the way as he did, through a maze of narrow lanes and winding alleys, in order to come at last to Sottoripa, to reach which we needed but to cross the Piazza of Banchi. Sottoripa

is a dark vaulted passage, or rather succession of passages, skirting the port, and along which almost every second door is that of some low tavern or public-house, the exclusive resort of sailors and porters. Lazzarino stopped in front of one of these taverns, and having looked suspiciously round, went in, crossed the large room full of guests, and led the way to a little dirty private apartment, which was vacant. A pint of wine was ordered and brought, and there we sat staring at each other across a small table.

"Have you seen my brother's new brig, the 'Polycrates?'" asked my companion at once in a loud voice.

Instead of answering, I looked at my interlocutor in some alarm, who no doubt reading my impression in my face, by way of re-assuring me, winked knowingly, and went on in the same tone.

"As fine a vessel as ever floated or cut the waves."

"Indeed!" said I.

"Ay, as true as you sit there. She was built at Varazze. Now," added he, after a moment's pause, in a tone of real saddened reflection, "few people know that there is a place of such a name in the world; and yet this poor little Italian Varazze turns out such a beautiful craft as that, which positively outsailed an English frigate, and a good sailer too, last trip to Leghorn. Indeed she did."

The dialogue, or rather I should say the monologue, went on for some time in this strain, till my new friend rose, and with the cautious steps and jerks of a Buffo—in every duet of every Opera Buffa, went to the door, listened, looked through

the key-hole, and then returned stealthily; and suddenly changing his tone—

"*A me non me la ficcano*, an old bird like me is not caught with chaff!" whispered he, while his features brightened and his whole countenance beamed with intense self-satisfaction. "Come now, was not the Life Insurance Company a capital hit? ha! ha!" and he laughed till he held both his sides.

These few words gave me at once an insight into the character before me. Lazzarino was a specimen of that numerous family born to make much ado about nothing, and complicate what is simple. They are for ever fighting wind-mills instead of giants, and pride themselves on doing so. An individual of this genus, who meddles in conspiracy—and nature leads them that way—is the very perfection of the kind.

"Now, say," resumed Lazzarino, "hav'nt I managed this matter knowingly?"

I was on the point of answering that one half the fuss he had made about this meeting was more than enough to set all the spies of the town on our track; but on second thoughts I kept this sentiment to myself, and nodded acquiescence, adding—

"Now, would you be so good as to explain . . . .

"All right, all right," interrupted the little fellow, "when Lazzarino undertakes a trust . . . . hush!—well, well, Lazzarino is known, and it is not for me to say any more upon the subject." Then giving himself a great thump on his breast, he added, "Here it is, all safe!" and chuckled with delight.

Was this an allusion to the satisfactory state of his lungs, or to something that lay hidden under the breast of his blue jacket? I clung rather to the latter hypothesis, and accordingly said,—

"If I understand you right, you have a message to deliver."

"A message!—you may call it a message if you please. Fantasio called it something else when he confided it to me." "Lazzarino," these were his very words, "here is a bomb-shell, ay, and with the fusee burning. Now, will you carry it safe to my friends out there?" "That I will," says I. "Mind you," says he, "this is a matter of life and death, and rather than let that packet fall into any but the right hands, you must blow yourself and it to atoms. Will you undertake it?" "I will," says I; "and here it is safe and sound," with a fresh thump on his chest. "What do you say to that, eh?"

"I say you are a jewel of a man," answered I; "but where is the packet?"

"Stop a bit;" returned Lazzarino, "you must know all about it first:" and he went on to give me a detailed account of all the ingenious contrivances he had hit upon to convey this same *shell* safely—of the numerous narrow escapes he had had, and of the astonishing amount of presence of mind, spirit, and coolness, which had been required to overcome the various difficulties. On my again mentioning the letter, he began to expatiate on the state of parties in France, affirmed that Louis Philippe was a lost man, that things in general were going on capitally, etc., etc. Having thus tantalized

me to his heart's content, Lazzarino went to the door again, listened, looked through the key-hole, and at last drew forth from the folds of his blue jacket a letter of such stupendous dimensions, that at sight of it I could not help breaking into an immoderate fit of laughter, seeing which Lazzarino chimed in most heartily, only stopping now and then just to ask if he was a man or if he was not.

I said he was a clever fellow, and moved to take leave. Lazzarino reiterated his offers. If I wanted him I had only to inquire for Lazzarino at Banchi. Everybody knew Lazzarino. He always spoke of himself in the third person. His name was Lazzaro Stella, but he went commonly by the familiar appellation of "Lazzarino." He told me that his brother Adriano, a merchant captain, was expected soon from Leghorn; a regular *brick*, who was deep in Fantasio's counsels, and knew everything about the *shell*. Thereupon we shook hands and parted.

A letter from Fantasio, especially after so long a silence, was quite an event, and great was my impatience and that of Cæsar to become acquainted with its contents. However, as by the time I got home dinner was on the table, it was a full hour before we could shut ourselves up in my room and open the monster-epistle. Well might Lazzarino call it a shell with the fusee burning. There was in it more than enough to blow himself, and some others too, sky-high. It contained—

1st. A quantity of letters of all sizes, directed to different persons in Genoa, Turin, Leghorn, etc.; those for Genoa to be

delivered with our own hands, those for other towns to be sent by some safe opportunity.

2d. A long and most minutely detailed plan of a secret society.

3d. A letter filling four sheets of foolscap paper, addressed to the "two brothers," of which I must here give as brief an abstract as possible.

The order of things that had arisen out of the Revolution of July was, according to Fantasio's account, satisfactory to no one, and France was on the eve of a new revolution. Political sects were hard at work there as well as in Germany, Hungary, Southern Italy, and elsewhere, to bring about an European insurrection. There was not a moment, therefore, to be lost, if we wished to be in readiness to act in concert with the other countries when the favourable opportunity should arrive. We must get ourselves organized without the loss of a day. We knew by our own experience—Fantasio went on to say—that Carbonarism with its pedantic delays, its limited circle of action, its distrust of youth, would never do. On the other hand, the *Federating* scheme, carried on as hitherto, though it would afford us useful elements for a new system of things, was far too loosely strung together to become as effective an instrument as was called for by the exigencies of the times. To obtain a deliberative voice in the councils of the secret alliance of nations, we must have a regular, complete, and above all, strongly centralized organization.

According to Fantasio, the spirit of the age required that all political associations should rest upon some decided prin-

ciple, and have an avowed creed. Secret societies had hitherto been contented with proposing to themselves as their final aim liberty in the abstract, without considering or determining what form of government would afford the best guarantees for its establishment, gradual development, and duration. It was high time to put an end to this vague misty state of things, high time to put forward a creed and a banner—which of course could be no other than a republican one.

Europe was gravitating towards that centre, and the government which should succeed that of Louis Philippe would to a certainty be a republic. Fantasio adduced at great length, and with remarkable strength of argument, the reasons which, in respect to Italy, rendered the establishment of a republic not only eligible but necessary. The homogeneity of principle in the elements of the new republican association would secure to it an irresistible force of cohesion, and, when the day of trial should come, an overwhelming power of action. And he ventured to say that the society, of which he now sent us the plan and regulations, was such as was required by the spirit of the present day, and the general disposition of the public mind in Europe.

Our patriotic feelings, and our friendship for himself, made Fantasio feel sure of our assistance. Influential names were by no means necessary; the one thing needful was the co-operation of men of energetic will and steadfast faith—men active, indefatigable, and determined to succeed or to die in the attempt. Now, such he knew us to be. A provisional

committee ought instantly to be formed in Genoa, and to enter without a moment's delay on the task of the new organization. Cæsar, Sforza, the Prince, Lazzarino's brother, (of whom Fantasio spoke highly,) and myself, could form a primary nucleus, to which might accede in course of time such persons as we should think fit.

As for himself (Fantasio) he was as well placed as possible to give us information, useful directions, and help of every kind. He was in constant communication with the European committee in Paris, and with the most distinguished members of the Italian emigration, all of them old experienced conspirators. With some of these he had united to form a directing committee at Marseilles. He hoped to hear from us soon, and pointed out a safe and regular channel of correspondence from Genoa to Marseilles and *vice versa*.

As to Lazzarino, the bearer of the letter, Fantasio said we were not to mind his odd ways. Though the man could not sneeze without looking mysterious, and making a fuss about it, he was a most devoted creature, entirely to be trusted, and likely to be useful in many ways; and so in fact he proved. Added to this, Lazzarino's brother, Adriano, was an extremely influential person among men on 'Change, and those connected with shipping, and altogether a most valuable acquisition.

Then followed a complete plan of the new society, descending even to the most trifling details; as to the form of the administration of the oath, the manner of affiliation, the words and signs of recognition, etc. The principal outlines

of the association may be summed up as follow :—A central committee at Genoa in direct communication with the directing one at Marseilles; provincial committees in all the principal towns, in communication with the central one; and propagandist leaders in every minor town or village, in communication with the provincial committees. The adepts were of two sorts, simple members and propagandists, the latter only having the right of initiation.

A series of very minute and very judicious rules was then agreed on, intended to regulate and limit the intercourse of members with each other. Everything in order to secure secrecy and to prevent indiscretion was so nicely calculated, and so cleverly arranged, as to render detection next to impossible. All this looked very well on paper; it only remained to be seen whether it would answer as well in practice.

When we had perused the whole our eyes met in silence. Cæsar looked very grave.

"What do you say to this, Cæsar?"

"Why, my only fear is that we should prove unequal to the trust; yet," pursued he, after a pause, "it is tempting, it assigns to us a noble part, to stand foremost in devotion and danger."

"Had we not better see our friends," said I, "and hear their opinion?"

"I was just thinking so," was his reply.

CHAPTER XXX.

WE ENTER INTO FANTASIO'S VIEWS, AND SET TO WORK ACCORDINGLY; RISE AND PROGRESS OF THE NEW ASSOCIATION.

On the evening of that very day, at our request, Alfred, Sforza, and the Prince, assembled at our house, and we communicated to them Fantasio's letter. On Sforza and the Prince it had the effect which the smell of gunpowder is said to have on veteran soldiers. They clapped their hands in applause, and said it was the "very thing!" Alfred looked puzzled as usual, when something bold and extraordinary suddenly presented itself before him.

"I admire your readiness, my dear friends," said Cæsar. "I know of old that yours is the faith that levels mountains. Yet you will not, I hope, take it amiss if I say two words to point out clearly the precise nature of the proposed undertaking. Here are we, five young, very young men, with but limited means, and we are called upon to do nothing less than to overthrow an established government. We have no resources to rely upon but those which we shall be able to create for ourselves. Consider then, we have everything to do. This is the long and the short of the matter. Will you undertake this in the face of such difficulties?"

"We will!" shouted Sforza and the Prince in a breath.

"So be it then!" resumed Cæsar, "and so God help us! That our efforts may be blest let us set to our task honestly, and with straightforwardness. Let there be no humbug—no phantasmagoria—we have had more than enough of that—no seductive hints about illustrious names, kept discreetly incog.—no imaginary princes of the blood in the back-ground. Let any one who joins us know that he joins a set of men, whose power rests neither on high connexions, nor on the support of any one of rank or station; but whose dependence is on their pure devotion and indomitable will. On this understanding, I am your man!"

"And our leader for ever!" cried at once Sforza and the Prince, rising and embracing Cæsar. Alfred, spurred by their example, did the same.

"Thank you, my friends," said Cæsar; "but enough of this, and now to business. I have a presentiment that few of us will live to see the final results of our labours, but the seed we have sown will shoot forth after us, and the bread we have cast upon the waters will be found again."

How many times in afterdays have I recalled these words, and the melancholy smile that accompanied them!

On the morrow, according to previous agreement, the Prince started for Turin, Sforza for Nice, and Alfred for Sarzana, for all of which places Fantasio had furnished us with letters of introduction. Nice being situated on the borders of France, at no great distance from Marseilles, and smuggling upon a large scale being carried on along the coast between the two countries, Fantasio had dwelt upon

the paramount importance of establishing there, as soon as possible, a nucleus of sure adherents, willing to receive and forward such political books or printed papers as he might have occasion to send.

Sforza, though poor as a rat, could not be prevailed upon to accept any money for his travelling expenses, which Alfred and the Prince repeatedly offered him. He had savings enough, he said, (God knows what they were!) to undertake the journey, and having an economical travelling system of his own, a little money went a great way. His boasted system, poor fellow, was travelling on foot. His expulsion from College had not only debarred him from entering the army, for which he had a decided taste, but had also precluded his following any of the liberal professions. His father, who farmed a little estate of his own some leagues from Genoa, and contrived to maintain himself by it, lacked the means, in spite of the best will, to support his son in the capital; and Sforza, though an affectionate son, was too much engrossed by politics to prevail upon himself to settle in a small hamlet, cut off from all intellectual and political communication. His only means of support was giving a few cheap drawing lessons, by which indeed he earned little; but his habits were so frugal, and his wants so few, that he contrived with that little to make a decent figure.

Cæsar and I remained in town, and took upon ourselves the delivery of those of Fantasio's letters that were destined for Genoa, and to effect and superintend the transformation of the federating scheme into a regular secret association.

But first of all we let Fantasio know, by the safe means of correspondence he had suggested, that his plan was accepted, and that a provisional Central Committee had been constituted, composed of Cæsar, Sforza, the Prince, and myself. Alfred, always timid and self-diffident, could not be prevailed upon to make part of it nominally, though he did so in point of fact. We reserved a place for Adriano, Lazzarino's brother, who, on his arrival a few days afterwards, accepted it; and one for Count Alberto, to whom one of Fantasio's letters was addressed. But Count Alberto declined, on the plea that, as a Carbonaro, he did not feel himself free to belong to any other sect. This was a reasonable scruple, and we urged the matter no further. But Count Alberto volunteered his services and his earnest co-operation, so as to become a valuable link between us and the Carbonari, if ever they should resume activity.

There was no difficulty in transforming the Federates into regular associates. Nine out of ten most willingly joined the new sect. The adoption of a republican creed met with few, if any, objections. If there was to be a creed, it was a necessity, acknowledged even by the partisans of constitutional monarchy, that it should be the Republican. Representative monarchy lacked a plausible candidate for the crown of Italy.

National pride, of course, would not admit of a foreign monarch, and the personal antecedents of all the little Italian Princes were so deplorably bad and anti-national, that no person in his senses would have thought of offering the crown

of Italy to any of them. The Pope, of course, was out of the question. The Bourbons of Naples, not to speak of their not being considered as Italians, had, since the perjury of Ferdinand I.,—who had sworn to the Constitution in 1820, and then destroyed it,—lost all credit, and were looked upon as regular swindlers. The Prince of Lucca, as a Bourbon, was in the same predicament. The Duke of Tuscany was an Austrian. An Austrian too, in heart if not by birth, was the Duke of Modena, whose mild rule had won for him the surname of the Executioner. The ex-Prince of Carignano, then King of Sardinia under the name of Carlo Alberto, was just at that time most unpopular. The Piedmontese, and indeed the whole Peninsula, had hailed his accession to the throne, six months previously, with high-wrought anticipation. They seemed to have forgotten,—to their credit be it said,—that there were dark spots on this Prince's career since 1821, and only to remember that it was in the name of Carlo Alberto, then Regent, that, in that memorable year, constitutional liberty, however short-lived, had been inaugurated in Piedmont. But as time went on without bringing any change for the better; as the Jesuits continued all-powerful, and not even an amnesty was granted to the Prince's old associates in the constitutional movement, a reaction had taken place in public opinion, and the disappointment was proportionate to the preceding expectation, that is, excessive.

This accounts for the ease with which we got the republican principle accepted by the rising association. But all

who made part of it were not republicans from conviction. Many among them, on the contrary, especially among those who in course of time joined it, would have preferred a representative monarchy to a republic, and if they accepted the latter it was from a feeling of the practical impossibility of bringing anything else to bear. Others cared only for the one great point, the independence of Italy, and, to secure that, were ready to accede to any form of government. Hence it may easily be understood how it happened that, when in 1848 Carlo Alberto bestowed a constitution, and came to an open rupture with Austria, what remained of the association split into two fractions, of which one, composed of the two elements we have just mentioned, rallied round the standard of the constitutional king—the champion of national independence, while the other—the republican party, abstained from taking part in, or declared against the movement, because originating with and headed by a king.

A sect starting at once with a social capital of a hundred well educated, gentlemanly, intelligent, active members, three fourths of whom had a right to initiate others—and how refuse this right to such fellows! a sect so constituted, I say, could scarcely fail to carry on matters rapidly. The more so if we take into account the richness of the soil on which it was called to labour.

The elements of dissatisfaction were perhaps more abundant in the ancient Genoese territory than in any other Italian province. First, there existed there, as in every other part of the mother country, the purely Italian, or anti-

Austrian feeling, the bent and aim of which was the expulsion of the foreigner, and consequent national independence; and, secondly, the Genoese, or purely municipal feeling, which looked simply to the overthrow of the intruding Piedmontese Government. The first of these elements was predominant to a certain degree in the enlightened and cultivated classes, and a part of the young nobles; but in the popular classes, and among the old patricians, the anti-Piedmontese spirit was predominant.

The hostile feeling between the Genoese and Piedmontese could be traced very far back, and had its source in the endless feuds which had existed for ages between the Piedmontese monarchy and the republic of Genoa. So when the Congress of Vienna, in 1815, with one stroke of the pen, struck the proud Republic from the map of Europe, to give it up and incorporate it with the kingdom of Piedmont, its old and mortal foe, the national pride of all classes smarted cruelly, and the Piedmontese were looked upon in the light of intruders and usurpers. Nor can it be denied, consistently with truth, that the new governors did nothing to allay this wounded feeling; on the contrary, they treated Genoa like a conquered country.

Nevertheless, as time ran on, the spirit of animosity began to subside, and in spite of the mismanagement of the new Government, the act of incorporation not only came to be accepted with a certain degree of resignation, but even to be looked upon as a step towards the so-desired unity, and an increase of strength, which might one day be turned against

the common enemy. Unfortunately, this view, which was pretty general among the enlightened and liberal portion of society, did not extend beyond the circles in which it had originated, and, with a few exceptions, did not penetrate into the popular classes, who still nursed their resentments, and remained stanchly anti-Piedmontese.

Our task among this latter portion of society, rich in its elements of strength and intelligence, was necessarily a task of conciliation fraught with many a difficulty, and requiring a good deal of tact; for if, on the one hand, we could not foster and encourage feelings that were opposed to our own, and to the object we had in view, so, on the other, we could not openly assault prejudices deeply rooted, and to a certain extent respectable, and thus estrange from the cause well meaning and devoted hearts.

Have you ever been near to one of those stage-decorations, the effect of which is so striking at a distance, and seen how on a close view the illusion vanishes, and you have nothing before you but gaps, misshapen blots, and strokes seemingly thrown about by chance? So, to a certain extent, it fares with a conspiracy. Seen from a distance, and viewed as a whole, nothing more striking and full of poetry than the mighty compendium of so many wills and forces moved by one spring, and working its way in the dark, through difficulty and danger of every description, towards the noblest and most legitimate of conquests, that of liberty and independence! But if, from the contemplation of this whole, you descend to observe the details—farewell poetry, and hail to

very commonplace prose! How much egotism, how much littleness clogs the springs of this multifarious machinery!

Verily, I assure you, the path of a conspirator is not strewn with roses, least of all of conspirators situated as we were, viz., known by and accessible to everybody. I know of no existence which requires such continual self-abnegation and endurance. A conspirator has to listen to all sorts of gossip, to soothe every variety of vanity, discuss nonsense seriously, feel sick and stifling under the pressure of empty talk, idle boasting, and vulgarity, and yet maintain an unmoved and complacent countenance. A conspirator ceases to belong to himself, and becomes the toy of any one he may meet; he must go out when he would rather stay at home, and stay at home when he would rather go out; he has to talk when he would be silent, and to hold vigils when longing to be in bed. Verily, I say, it is a miserable life. It has, it is true, its compensations, few but sweet; the occasional intercourse with lofty minds and devoted souls; the glimpse of the silver lining of the dark cloud, and the conviction that all this wear and tear is smoothing the way, inch by inch, towards a noble and holy end.

This conviction we had, and it kept us up on our weary way. In six months of incessant labour, we had obtained results, at which we were ourselves astonished. Not a single town of any importance in the kingdom, but had its committee at work; not a considerable village that lacked its propagandist leader. We had succeeded in establishing regular and sure means of communication between the several

committees in the interior, and we corresponded abroad, through affiliated travellers, with Tuscany and Rome, through Leghorn and Civita Vecchia, and so on to Naples. The number of adepts had multiplied to such an extent, that we soon felt the necessity of slackening the impulse. People of all classes joined us—nobles, commoners, lawyers, men employed under Government, merchant-captains, sailors, artisans, priests, and monks. Among these last named, my old friend Vadoni, now one of our sect, pushed on propagandism indefatigably, as did our colleagues Adriano Stella and the Prince, the first among the seafaring class, the second among the nobility.

Things were going on thus prosperously, when a traveller arrived from Turin with a piece of bad news. A disagreement about some unimportant point had arisen in the committee at Turin, in consequence of which two of its most influential members had given in their resignation. We instantly made up our minds to despatch a confidential person to Turin, with instructions to use his best endeavours to restore a good understanding among our friends there. This trust was committed to me; and I undertook it the more readily, as I hoped to make the journey serve for the attainment of another object which we had much at heart.

To obviate the want of arms, of which we had none, and the introduction of which offered such difficulties as amounted to positive impossibility, we had thought of making some proselytes in the corps of Artillery which guarded the arsenal, so as to gain access to it when occasion might require, and

possess ourselves of the arms which we needed. The Artillery was reputed, and was, in fact, a well informed and liberal corps, and we might reasonably reckon upon finding in its ranks a number of sympathizing adherents. But hitherto all our endeavours to establish any communications in that quarter had proved fruitless, partly owing to the extreme caution necessary in so delicate an attempt, and partly to the circumstance of the Artillery being almost all Piedmontese, far from their homes, and consequently, offering none of those opportunities for acquaintanceship which spring from the intercourse of families inhabiting the same town. At Turin, perhaps, by the help of our friends there, I might succeed, through mutual acquaintances, in getting a letter of introduction to some officer of the corps stationed at Genoa, or at least some useful information on the subject.

My father offered no objection to my going to spend a few days, as I told him, at the house of an old fellow-student. So I went, and took a place in the coach, which was to start next morning at seven.

CHAPTER XXXI.

I ANTICIPATE AN EVENING OF QUIET ENJOYMENT, AND MEET WITH NOTHING BUT VEXATION, AND WHAT COMES OF IT.

RETURNING that same evening from the coach-office, to which my portmanteau had been carried, I happened to pass before the Carlo Felice Theatre. My eye was by chance attracted to the play-bill, and I saw Bellini's Sonnambula advertised, in which a new prima donna was to make her first appearance. It was very long since I had entered a theatre; the Sonnambula was a great favourite of mine, two circumstances which, uniting to a third—that I had nothing better to do, decided me to go in.

The house was crowded, and it was with some difficulty I got a place, the last, and not a very comfortable one, at the furthest end of a row of orchestra seats. The delicious tarantella of the first scene was being performed amid universal silence, when the door of a box on my left, just above my head, opened noisily. All eyes turned that way, and so did mine. Presently, in came a tall, elderly lady, with white feathers on her head, followed by Count Alberto, leading in—Lilla! My heart gave a bound. I had never seen her since the stormy meeting at San Secondo. She took her seat with her back to the stage, almost opposite to me, only a little

sideways. There she was in all the brilliancy of youth and beauty, set off by a splendid and very tasteful dress, so near me that I could hear her rich Italian, and that, had I stood up and stretched out my hand, I could have touched her.

I would have given a good deal to have been somewhere else, but there I was, and there I must remain, and look as unconcerned as I could. Never did spectator appear more engrossed and interested by what was passing on the stage, yet no spectator ever heard or saw less than I did of what was going on. My whole attention was concentrated, and, as it were, rivetted on the box above me, and from my seat being a little farther back, I was admirably placed for following, with the corner of my eye, every the slightest motion of its occupants, without appearing to do so. For a time she was quiet. I suppose she had not discovered me; but her demeanour soon altered. She became restless, talked much, laughed, and fanned herself incessantly.

After the cavatina of the prima donna, there came into the box a *garde du corps*, as well as I could guess—but I could not be sure, who was received with demonstrations of high glee. Count Alberto went out, and the new comer sat by Lilla's side. A flirtation was evidently going on between her and this officer. Presently she whispered something in his ear. The *garde du corps*, or whoever he might be, took out his opera-glass, leant over the front of the box, and looked down at me; I was sure of this. The first act being over, there was a change of places between Lilla and the elderly

lady in white feathers, and the officer stood up, and used his opera-glass pretty freely.

I took advantage of that moment to cast a glance into the box. He perceived it, and looked hard at me. I returned his look with usury. This sort of by-play recurred two or three times in the course of the evening. Whenever I looked at the box, that man was staring at me. I now distinctly saw that he was an officer of the *garde du corps*. I was certain I had seen his ugly face before, but I could not give a name to it. To whom did those mustachios—so very fair that they appeared white, and which he was continually twisting and caressing with such insolent foppery—belong?

Lilla resumed her former seat; the officer went in and out of the box, apparently quite at home. Nothing remarkable occurred during the remainder of the evening. Towards the end of the opera, Count Alberto reappeared, and the *garde du corps* took his leave, not without sending me a parting glance. At last the curtain fell, and there was an end of it. I was as weary and worn out with the long and painfully anxious restraint I had endured, as if I had been rolling the stone of Sisiphus all day. As I came out, I vowed internally that I would not be caught at the theatre again in a hurry, and, as a consolation, lighted a cigar. I had stopped for this purpose, when I felt a tap on the shoulder. Thinking it was somebody who wanted to light his cigar from mine, I turned round, and found myself face to face with the officer.

"What do you want?" said I.

"I want to know," returned he, "what you meant by looking at me so intently?"

"Since you saw I was looking at you, I suppose you were looking at me," was my reply.

"Suppose I was, what of that?" insisted he, twisting his mustachio.

"A liberty you chose to take with me, Sir, I should imagine I might take with you—that's all."

"That is not all," returned he; "if I gave offence——"

"Not in the least," interrupted I, "a cat may look at a king," and I moved on.

"The matter cannot end in this way," continued my interlocutor, following me; "if you choose not to be offended, well and good; but I am, and—you know what that means."

I thought of the fable of the wolf and the lamb; only my man looked more like a cat than a wolf.

"You mean that you wish to pick a quarrel with me; that is what you mean," said I, warmly.

"Take it as you please," retorted he; "but I must have that satisfaction which men of honour give each other. We are not at College now."

The word "College" was a revelation to me. Why, it was Anastasius, no other than Anastasius, covered with gold lace, and looking fierce! How was it that I had not at once recognised him?

All my anger vanished at the discovery. Really, the idea of fighting my ex-tyrant had something ludicrous in it.

"It is you then," said I, with unfeigned surprise; "how extremely hot you are grown."

"No nonsense!" interrupted Anastasius; "please to name your time."

"Faith, I have no time left; I am off to-morrow at seven on pressing business."

"Am I to understand by this that you refuse me satisfaction?"

"Understand what you please," said I; "the fact is, that I set off to-morrow morning for Turin, and I cannot be here and there at the same time."

"D—— me if I don't horsewhip you in the street some day!"

"D—— me if I don't kill you like a dog if you dare!"

With this gracious leave-taking we separated, and I went home to bed.

That the provocation I had just received was at Lilla's instigation—the realization of her threat—that Anastasius was but an unconscious tool in the vindictive lady's hand, was too evident to admit of a doubt. Anastasius was not naturally a lion; he knew too well that I was a match for him, to have sought to provoke a quarrel with me on such an idle pretext, unless worked up to do so by some foreign influence. Would he persist? That remained to be seen. At all events, I was not sorry to have been able to take advantage of the fact of my departure, to give him a little time to cool.

I had never reflected deeply on the subject of duelling.

All I can say is, that I had no objection to the practice. I considered it as an unpleasant extremity, not to be had recourse to without strong and serious motives, just like the drawing of a tooth; still, in some cases justifiable, and even necessary. What made me wish to avoid a hostile meeting with Anastasius, was the non-existence of any sufficient cause for it. I could not even work myself up to be angry with the fool, and could as little reconcile myself to the chance of killing a fellow-creature, or being killed by him in cool blood.

Anastasius had never forgiven me for the part I had taken in his downfal and disgrace at College. Since then we had never met in the street or in a public place (in company we never met) without exchanging looks but little friendly. Later, some three or four years after leaving College, I had heard it publicly rumoured that he had lost a considerable sum at the gaming-table, which not being able to pay, he had gone abroad, and scandal whispered that he had followed the fortunes of an opera-dancer. Be this as it may, I had heard nothing more of him since then, either of good or evil report, till this very evening, full five years after his disappearance, when, quite unexpectedly, I met him at the opera, transformed into a *garde du corps*. The reader may see that his boyish ill-will towards me had had time enough to subside.

The *Garde du corps* was composed of tall, young, handsome fellows, of good family, (how that ape Anastasius had been admitted among them, I cannot guess,) who had the privilege of keeping guard about the royal person, and in

the royal apartments. As a corps, they did not enjoy the very best moral reputation, and there were fathers and husbands who had the bad taste not to allow their wives and daughters to frequent the society to which these privileged officers were admitted. But, by way of compensation, they were said to be the pets of usurers and money-lenders. That they were quarrelsome, fond of fighting, and not a little impertinent towards the peaceful burghers, was an opinion generally current, and unfortunately founded on fact.

My stay in Turin was short. A fortnight sufficed to accomplish in the most satisfactory manner the double object of my journey thither. I had succeeded in settling all differences between the members of the committee, and I brought back with me a letter of introduction to a young artillery officer, then quartered at Genoa, who would prove indeed a valuable acquisition, if only one half of the praise I had heard of him was deserved. I returned therefore in high spirits, which however were soon damped.

Cæsar took me almost immediately aside, and asked me, with a certain solemnity, to tell him what had passed between Anastasius and myself. I told him. Cæsar then informed me how Anastasius went about saying on all hands, that he had challenged me, and I had refused; in short, that I had shewn the white feather. In one way or another, it was quite necessary to put a stop to the report, and to the braggart's boastings. Sforza and the Prince would give me more minute details; they were to come and see me the very evening of my arrival to talk the matter over.

In fact they did come, and the Prince related all the particulars of a conversation about me which had taken place at Count Alberto's in his presence, and the account of which made my blood boil. Anastasius had related what passed between us a fortnight before—embellishing the theme with jokes, which occasioned much laughter at my expense, especially on the part of Count Alberto's sister—and had ended by saying that, to infuse a little spirit into me, he was determined to horsewhip me in public. The Prince of course took up my cause with much warmth, and if Count Alberto had not interfered, observing, that it was necessary to await my return, things would have gone farther between Anastasius and the Prince. At all events, he was fully determined, he said, upon pursuing the affair on his own account, if I had any motives, which he was not aware of, for not taking it up myself.

While the Prince was speaking, I had already made up my mind as to what was to be done. I had instantly felt that all thoughts of conciliation must be relinquished, and that if I did not quickly bow to public opinion on such a matter, I should at once lose the estimation and influence I possessed among my friends. "Would Sforza and the Prince be my seconds?" "Of course they would." "Well then, they must be so good as to go instantly to Anastasius, and tell him from me, that I had returned, and was quite at his service. As to the conditions of the meeting—the place, the hour, and all particulars, I put myself entirely in their hands, and gave them *carte blanche*."

Anastasius was not to be found till next morning, and the day was far advanced before all preliminaries were settled. Sforza and the Prince brought me word that the meeting was arranged for the following morning at five o'clock. Lest any of us should oversleep ourselves they proposed to spend the night in my room; a proposal to which I readily assented, only regretting the scantiness of the accommodation I could offer. The Prince went to fetch a case of pistols, they being the weapons which had been agreed upon. On his return about ten o'clock we had a little supper, a little talk, and a cigar. At twelve o'clock Cæsar had retired to his room; my two seconds were snoring most comfortably, the Prince on a sofa, and Sforza in an arm-chair; and I was in bed soliloquizing.

"How strange that this Anastasius, who had cost me many a sleepless night when a boy, should start up now after the lapse of ten years, and again interfere with my rest! that a being morally inferior to me, as he was, could have any sort of influence over my destiny!

"Again, how odd that any man's honour should be at the mercy of the first passer by; that any chance individual could impeach it, leaving no alternative but to redeem it by fighting! That a scoundrel, a bankrupt, a maniac,—such things have been,—who might take it into his head to do so, could tear you from your affections, your pursuits, even from the guidance of your own moral sense, and force you to kill or to be killed!

"Suppose I had spoken to Anastasius thus:—'My

honour, thank God, is not dependent upon what a blackguard like you may say or think about it, consequently I do not see why I should fight in defence of that which is not in jeopardy. 'If you are tired of life, it is not for me to help you out of it, go and hang yourself!' Now, would there not have been some sense in this, and some courage also? So much, indeed, that I dared not do it. Nay, if I had said so, and acted accordingly, what an unanimous storm of hisses would my sense and courage have raised! Those very young men, who were at that moment snoring beside me, and who truly loved me, would have looked upon me as a madman, or as a degraded being. Surely man's brain is at times a curiously reasoning apparatus!".

I kept thus soliloquizing till at last I fell asleep. I was dreaming that I stood face to face with my adversary, ready to fire, and that yet, in spite of all my efforts, I could not get my hand to pull the trigger, when the Prince awoke me. I found that my right arm, upon which the weight of my body had been resting, was asleep. In a few minutes we were dressed, and sallied forth. Cæsar came out with us, but left us at the corner of the street, to go in search of a young surgeon, one of our friends, with whom he had made an appointment, and who was to remain at a little distance from the ground, to give assistance if required.

It was a calm, serene, lovely morning. When we came upon the bridge of Carignano the first rays of the sun just tinged the summits of the Apennines, which spread their gracefully indented line in bright relief against the eastern

sky. Some fishing boats were gliding along the sea below, which was calm and shining as a mirror. A few trees on the left of the Church, in front of which we halted, swarmed with merry birds, hopping to and fro, and chirping joyously.

Presently we saw three persons cross the bridge, and come towards us. It was Anastasius and his seconds, two of his brother officers. Shortly afterwards we could hear the rattle of their spurs against the sounding flagstones. Anastasius had a braggadocio air about him, which we heartily enjoyed. He was majestically wrapped in a cloak, though there was no need for it, his foraging cap was cocked on one side, and his mustachio had a knowing twist. He and his companions had long cigars in their mouths.

A little to the left of the church opened a narrow lane, solitary at all times, but especially at so early an hour. We went a little way into it and then stopped. The ground was soon measured, his place assigned to each of the combatants, and we only awaited the signal. I could not help thinking of the duel of a less dangerous kind I had fought with the Prince—backed by Anastasius—just ten years before ; and how odd it was that the actors in that childish drama should have their parts, though differently distributed, in this new and more serious one.

The signal was given, and the two pistols were discharged. At the same instant I felt a blow on my side. "D—— the rascal, he has hit him," cried the Prince, passing his arm round my body to support me. In fact, I bled copiously, and felt

faint. In a few seconds all the company were assembled round me, including the surgeon, and Cæsar, who looked so pale that my first thought was to address some words of comfort to him. They laid me gently on the ground, while the medical man examined the wound. "It was nothing," he said, "a mere flesh-wound, but somebody must run for a sedan-chair, as walking was out of the question for me." Sforza went to fetch the chair; a usual conveyance in Genoa, and in the meantime the surgeon applied bandages dipped in water to stop the bleeding, while the Prince, as directed, wetted my temples and my lips with eau de cologne. I observed that the Prince then took Anastasius and his companions aside, and I supposed that he urged them to retire, which they did soon afterwards. I saw that Anastasius was dreadfully pale. The sedan-chair having been brought, I was carried home in it, and to avoid attracting attention accompanied by Cæsar only. Sforza, the Prince, and the surgeon had preceded us, and waited at the street door to carry me up stairs and put me to bed. Being scarcely six o'clock, nobody in the house was up, and we were able to steal in unawares, owing to a precaution of Cæsar's, who had taken a pass-key with him.

The surgeon then proceeded to extract the ball. The operation was short and skilfully performed, but so cruelly painful that I fainted. He reiterated his assurance that no vital organ had been injured, but the flesh, he said, was shockingly lacerated. The ball had lodged above the hip, just under the false ribs. Had I stood more sideways, as is custo-

mary in duels with pistols, the wound would most likely have proved fatal. So that I owed my life to my inexperience in such matters. The wound having been dressed, I was left alone, according to the directions of the surgeon; and Cæsar went to break the matter as gently as possible to my mother, who was made to believe at first that I had had a fall, and met with an injury, but so slight as to give no cause for uneasiness.

The first three days passed favourably; but on the fourth I was restless and feverish, and the wound gave me great pain. Something went wrong with it, suppuration had commenced, and a second operation became necessary, in order to enlarge the orifice of the wound. I suffered cruelly again, but was much relieved when it was over. There followed other complications, and several ups and downs. How I grumbled and fretted, and how tenderly, good-humouredly, and patiently, my mother, uncle John, Cæsar, Alfred, and Santina nursed and petted me, it is scarcely possible to say. To make a long story short, at the end of three and twenty interminable days, I was only allowed to leave my bed for an hour or so. What with loss of blood, the fever, pain, and low diet—I scarcely ate anything, and had no appetite—I was extremely weak, and reduced to a skeleton. Country air was recommended, and, so soon as it could be done with safety, I was put into a sedan-chair, and despatched to San Secondo, where my mother had preceded me to prepare all things for my reception, and where I was to remain till I was perfectly recovered.

Before dismissing this matter, I must acquaint the reader with some circumstances connected with it. First, that on the very afternoon of the day in which I was wounded, there came two unknown ladies, closely veiled, to inquire after me, the taller of whom evinced symptoms of the greatest agitation. She asked most particularly whether there were any danger, and seemed greatly comforted on being answered in the negative. The reader may give to whom he pleases the credit of this solicitous attention.

Secondly, that owing to the length of my illness, Cæsar went instead of me to present the letter of introduction I had brought with me from Turin, to the artillery officer to whom it was addressed. He was enchanted with this young man and the reception he met with from him, and a real friendship soon sprung up between them.

Thirdly, that though my duel had been a matter of publicity, and the laws against duelling were very severe, I was neither prosecuted nor troubled in any way for the affair. The Government, I suppose, thought me sufficiently punished by the wound I had received. Probably it was the same reason that made my father spare me any remonstrance on the subject. Anastasius, who had been on leave, was recalled to Turin, and there the affair ended.

The time of my convalescence at San Secondo was perhaps the happiest in my life. I never enjoyed existence itself so much. How sweet to be awakened by the song of birds, to hear the rustling of the leaves against my window, to sit for hours in the sun, and gaze upon the peaceful landscape!

What a new and deep interest there was in each blade of grass—in each drop of dew—in every flower—in the most tiny insect! With what relish I ate my coffee and toast, and asked for more, until it was positively refused! What a peculiar charm there was in feeling once more like a child, and being kept in order as such! How pleasant to have my mother come and offer me her arm for a walk—a very short one to be sure—only to the large chesnut tree, and no farther! Then a second walk a little before sunset. Then supper and a siesta on the sofa; and how sweet on awaking to see my mother working quietly with her knitting-needles, and to listen to Cæsar, to Alfred, or to uncle John, who came often, relating the news from town! And then to bed, to awake in the morning refreshed, and enjoy anew the sun, the flowers, the green fields, the walks, and last, but not least, my coffee and my toast.

Ah! what inexhaustible sources of enjoyment has God laid before man, if he would only recognise them, love Him, and be happy!

CHAPTER XXXII.

MUCH TO HOPE, MUCH TO FEAR; SUDDEN ALARM; DECEITFUL CALM; CATASTROPHE.

I COME now to the most painful part of my task. I feel like a belated traveller, who, as he passes before a cross erected on the road-side in memory of some frightful catastrophe, turns his eyes away, and hastens by. So I, in sight of the rock against which struck and perished all the hopes and joys of my life, feel a shudder in my heart, and am fain to hurry on.

Months and months had worn away, during which our subterranean work had proceeded with giant strides. How, indeed, could it be otherwise with such coadjutors (Alfred included) as I possessed? A bolder, more steadfast, devoted, indefatigable set of fine young fellows than these five were, it would be difficult to imagine. Truth to say, they were admirably seconded by many an intelligent enterprising agent, who had been formed under the guidance, and had caught in full the passion of the leaders. The most delicate commissions, the most dangerous undertakings were eagerly sought after and contended for. In a word—and to render justice to every one, I must say that devotion and self-sacrifice were the order of the day in all ranks. Surely the hour appointed by Pro-

vidence for the deliverance of Italy was not yet at hand, since such a combination of perseverance, self-denial, intelligence, and activity in its cause, were destined to fail in the attempt!

It must also be allowed that the directing committee at Marseilles gave us good assistance. Thanks to their agency, the crews of our merchant-vessels which traded to Marseilles returned well indoctrinated and enthusiastic; and in almost all the steam-boats that plied along the coast of the Mediterranean we had confidential agents, charged to carry to the different ports along their line, not only letters, but bales of printed political papers, which were thus introduced to be afterwards distributed inland.

These papers, consisting chiefly of elementary political tracts, written with simplicity, and adapted to the intelligence of the popular classes, were safely and regularly circulated throughout the State by means of our travellers, or through coach and carriers' offices, in most of which we had adherents; and there was no lack of associates ready and willing to read and explain these little books to those who were not themselves able to read or understand them. This kind of oral propagandism was our friend Lazzarino's forte.

But it was specially in a line hitherto unexplored—I mean in the army—that the progress of the Association was most marked. Vittorio, the young artillery officer to whom Cæsar during my illness had presented the letter of introduction, had proved an inestimably precious acquisition. He was a young

man of two and twenty, strikingly handsome. No man ever realized in my eyes, as he did, the type of a hero, both in body and in mind.

He was taller by a head than the tallest of us, and erect as a tower, and though a youthful down barely shaded his lip, his broad chest and shoulders bespoke the full development of manhood; yet so finely and harmoniously was he proportioned that he did not strike you as being much above the ordinary size. The lines of his spacious forehead, and of his whole countenance were of that pure cast that we so much admire in ancient Grecian statues; and his every motion and gesture bore that stamp of nobility and easy elegance with which nature endows her most favoured children. When looking at him in his simple but handsome uniform, leaning on his long sword, I could not help thinking of Achilles.

The inward was in keeping with the outward man. Vittorio had an ardent spirit, enthusiastically devoted to all that is good and noble, a mild and affectionate disposition, and uncommon capacity and activity. He was a fervent Christian, and as such his ideal of perfection was to realize and establish on earth those principles of equality and fraternity proclaimed in the New Testament.

Such a man, it will be readily conceived, could not do things by halves. He first of all secured the co-operation of two of his comrades and friends—his *staff* as he jocularly called them, and then went to work in right earnest. The success he met with exceeded his most sanguine expectations, and in a short time he was at the head of a respectable number of adepts.

We were thus secure of access to the arsenal, and of finding there not only the arms which we wanted, but a body of men ready to join and march with us. From the artillery, to which it had been at first confined, the work of propagandism soon spread to the other military corps of the town.

There could be no lack of elements of dissatisfaction in an army aristocratically constituted as ours was, (though by the law of conscription service was obligatory on all classes,) and in many corps of which merit was precluded from all advancement, if unaccompanied by pedigree or title. Now this was the case with nine-tenths of the numerous and well instructed class of non-commissioned officers. Let us add, with honest pride, the Piedmontese uniform covered many a brave heart, that beat high and fast at the words "Italy" and "National Independence."

Such was the state of our affairs in the beginning of the month of February 1833—just fourteen months from the first establishment of the new association—a state full of hope, but also full of danger.

Those who talk of secret societies so managed as to render detection impossible, talk nonsense. Undiscoverable secret societies have no existence but in the fancy of some over-credulous people. They are like those armies that exist only on paper, and run no chance of ever being beaten. An association comprising a considerable number of members, and which bestirs itself, is a mine ever within an ace of blowing up. In its ranks will be found boasters, zealots, and imprudent spirits, who are in themselves a perpetual danger; and then

such is human nature that even among those associates who may be best disposed to keep within the limits of prudence, impunity in the long run will generate a sort of false security, which leads to ruin. Conspirators may be likened to those who work with inflammable materials. At first they surround themselves with every possible precaution; but soon. and by insensible gradations, a trifle to-day, another to-morrow, and so on, is neglected or overlooked, till they become familiarized with danger; and seeing that the inflammable materials have not yet exploded, they end by feeling as if they never would.

Besides these sources of danger common to all secret associations, and constantly threatening their existence, ours had some causes of peril peculiar to itself, which increased its chances of detection; such as—to mention only the most prominent—the spreading of the sect among the military, in whose ranks a system of espionage was organized on a great scale, and the regular and constant dissemination of printed political papers. The usefulness of this sort of propaganda was incontestably great, but its dangers were, to say the least, in an equal ratio with its usefulness. The simultaneous appearance, at all points of the kingdom, of publications exciting to discontent, clearly indicated the existence of a permanent conspiracy, and was a continual challenge to the Government.

Vittorio was foremost in raising a warning voice as to the danger of this state of things, as well as to the positive necessity of prompt action. To such a degree had he pushed the

work in the corps to which he belonged, that, according to him, discovery was inevitable if we still delayed. "If we do not apply the match," he would say, "others will blow us up with our own mine." We felt no less than Vittorio the precariousness of our situation, but we felt at the same time the great responsibility attaching to a premature movement, which might remain isolated, and so be the ruin of everything. We were in a state of the utmost perplexity.

For an Italian insurrection to have any chance of success, it was indispensable that measures should be so combined as to divide the force of Austria. In pursuance of this object, the plan of the directing committee was, that the rising should be simultaneous in the Two Sicilies and in Piedmont. Unfortunately Naples was not yet ready, and required a little more time. In Piedmont itself, at least in several of the important points in the kingdom, the work was not so far advanced as in the Genoese territory, properly so called.

All that we could do under these circumstances, and this we did, was to lay before our friends at Marseilles a faithful account of the state of affairs with us, and of the perils attending further delay. At the same time we sent Alfred and Sforza into Piedmont, with positive instructions to communicate personally with the provincial committees, and with the propagandist leaders of the most important secondary towns, to lay before them the two following questions:— "Are you ready?" "If not, when do you expect to be so?" and to bring back categorical answers.

Although the two travellers, in order to save time, divided

the business between them, their tour occupied the greater part of the month of February; and the result, I am sorry to say, fell short of our expectation. Positive answers to our two queries were in great minority. Most of the committees and leaders, when brought to the point, had in an indefinite way asked for time.

Situated as we were, it was impossible for us to remain in this state of uncertainty. We requested, therefore, and easily obtained from the Directing Committee, a circular convoking a general assembly of delegates of the Association. This meeting was to be held at Locarno, a Swiss town on the Lago Maggiore, on the tenth day of the approaching March; but some difficulties of detail put it off till the last week of the month. Cæsar on this occasion was to represent the Committee of Genoa.

The delegates assembled in numbers at the place and time appointed. Not a single representative of the large towns was missing, and some cities had even sent several. Of the minor towns, about a fourth had failed. There were also some delegates from Lombardy, and some Lombard and Piedmontese refugees. The assembly chose for its president one of the Piedmontese refugees of 1821, a very old and influential man, and held two sittings, in which three questions were discussed.

1st. The proposal of immediate action, which was thrown out by a great majority.

2dly. The proposal of an indefinite adjournment, which was negatived by an inconsiderable majority.

And 3dly, and lastly, the proposal of an adjournment of two months from that time, which was carried by a majority of four or five votes. The movement was then fixed on, *nem. con.*, for the first days of the following June.

Cæsar returned, and gave us an account of his mission. When he named the month of June, Vittorio, who was present, started and said, "We shall never go on to that time; we shall die of a plethora before it arrives. As to me, come what may, they shall not take me alive; on that I am determined." It was not long before events seemed to confirm Vittorio's sad forebodings. A few days afterwards, he came to us in great agitation. "Did I not tell you so?" said he; "two of my men are arrested. We must act now, or we are lost!"

We were stunned by this intelligence. To be wrecked in sight of port was cruel indeed. On inquiring further into the particulars of the case, however, we found, to our indescribable relief, that it was not so bad as Vittorio's alarm portended. The fact was simply this:—Two sergeants, one of whom belonged to our Association, being probably excited by drink, had quarrelled and fought, and had been sent to prison. Vittorio took occasion from this to press upon us the expediency of immediate action. "If you still delay," said he, "you will be taken one by one. A conspiracy, once tampered with, is lost. Machiavelli himself says so."

Now, the case, even as stated by Vittorio, did not seem to justify our resorting to so extreme a remedy as that which he proposed. Too many interests, we observed, and of too

important a nature, were involved, to hazard them on a random cast without inevitable necessity. Now, did this necessity exist? It was far from proved that politics had anything to do with the arrest of the two sergeants. At all events, it was not rational to come to a precipitate decision, before having ascertained the extent of the danger that threatened our Association. We would make inquiries in some quarter which might be relied on, and according to the result, determine or not on any ulterior measures.

Among the many letters of introduction sent us by Fantasio through Lazzarino, there was one from Nasi to a friend of his, an old free-mason and Carbonaro; a sure man, as Nasi styled him. This gentleman, of about sixty years of age, held an important office in the police department. He had, when first applied to by me, flatly refused to make part of our Association, but volunteered his services just as if he were one of us; on the condition, however, that I alone of all the sect should know this, or have any communication with him. To this I openly objected, that Cæsar already knew all about Nasi's letter, and of my visit to him, and that I could not keep back from my brother the result of my present application. The old man was so well pleased with my frankness, that he declared himself satisfied that Cæsar also should know of his participation in our affairs—but no one else. From that time, Cæsar and I had maintained regular intercourse with our new friend, and received from him many a useful hint and direction.

To him, then, we immediately repaired, and told him the

long and short of the matter, with the fears to which it gave rise. Personally acquainted as he was with all the police officials, high and low; on intimate terms with the director of police himself, nobody, we said, was better situated than he to extricate us from our present perplexity; nobody could better ascertain the real state of things. It was easy for him to observe whether there was any unusual movement in the police department, whether those employed in it betrayed any symptom of alarm, disquiet, or preoccupation, or whether there was any show of affected security among them. We charged him to take note of every, the most trifling circumstance; to study countenances, to interpret the very silence; even to put himself into the frame of mind of one who was distrusted, and whom, perhaps, the other police officials might have an interest in lulling into confidence, or imposing upon. In short, we urged the matter with all the warmth and earnestness which the gravity of our situation suggested. The good old gentleman as warmly and earnestly expressed his readiness to carry through a strict and most minute investigation of the subject, and to report the result as soon as possible.

Nor was this the only step we took. In the afternoon of this same day, a few hours after receiving Vittorio's alarming communication, and even before our meeting with Nasi's friend, which took place in the evening, the Prince was despatched post-haste to Turin, to apprize our friends there of the new face affairs had assumed, and to secure, if need were, the co-operation of the capital without delay. We volun-

teered to take the initiative, but on condition that Turin should follow our example. The salvation of the Association depended upon this.

Three long days passed. By appointment, on the morning of the 4th, we met our friend in the police. The account he gave us was most reassuring. Everything was going on just as usual in the police department. Not a single official evinced the slightest sign of uneasiness or excitement. The affair of the two sergeants was scarcely spoken of. It was looked upon merely as a pot-house quarrel. Once more we breathed freely.

The next day the Prince returned with the intelligence that our friends in Turin positively refused to move at present. They did not lack the will, but the power to do so. The regiment on which they most relied had just been replaced by another. Nobody, they said, could foresee the moral effect on the capital of a successful insurrection in Genoa. Should any lucky chance offer, they would grasp at it; but, while things remained as they were, they could by no means engage to join a premature movement.

How we rejoiced, on hearing this, that we had done nothing precipitately!

Things went on quietly for some weeks, and we had gradually subsided into a state of comparative tranquillity, when one night, towards twelve o'clock, we heard a violent ringing at the door. Who could it be at so late an hour? Not probably a bearer of good news; but that our personal safety could be in danger, not even the shadow of a suspicion crossed

our minds. Nobody was up in the house but Cæsar and I, so we went and opened the door. In came a body of carabineers, headed by a commissary of police, who exhibited a warrant to secure the person of Cæsar Benoni, and search his papers. What a thunderbolt!

The household was soon assembled, and the examination of the papers began; very long and minute it was, and conducted in a spirit of annoyance and hostility quite remarkable; but, perhaps, only what might be expected, considering that the man who directed the business owed a debt of gratitude to the family, from whom he had formerly received many benefits, nay, had been literally rescued from starvation. Some of the papers were taken away. A last farewell, a squeeze of the hand, and Cæsar was marched off!

That my brother's capture was not an isolated fact, that it formed part of a whole set of measures of the same description, my heart told me but too truly. "If only Vittorio is safe, all may yet be well." This thought haunted me, and I kept muttering to myself, "If only Vittorio is safe!" I comforted my mother as well as I could, and by break of day went out, first to Alfred—he, thank God, was safe in bed. A few words of explanation, and we hurried away to Sforza. Poor Sforza! he had already been seized. The Prince was safe. Adriano Stella we knew to be at Leghorn.

We then took our way to the arsenal, where Vittorio and his friends had their quarters. Some of the artillery, headed by a serjeant, were posting a cannon at the gate of the arsenal. The sentry refused us entrance. We pleaded that we came

to see an officer, but the man had orders, and stuck to them. We were just going to retire, when the serjeant, whom I knew, came up to me, and whispered hurriedly, "Make off, make off, for God's sake, many of our men have been arrested;" he named some, among whom were Vittorio's two intimate associates, "and we are all confined to quarters."

"And Vittorio?" faltered I.

"Vittorio has not been seen since yesterday morning, nobody knows what is become of him."

My hair stood on end. I received as vivid an impression of Vittorio having been killed while attempting resistance, as if I had seen it with my own eyes.—Vittorio vanished! our tower of strength gone! We were lost, indeed, past redemption.

The arrests, chiefly among the military, that had been simultaneously effected during the night, were not many in number; but the choice of individuals on whom they had fallen, had struck the Association to the heart. Deprived of Vittorio, the soul of the military conspiracy; of his two coadjutors, and of some others of our best artillerymen; with no communication possible with the rest of our friends in the corps, who were strictly watched, and confined to their barracks, we were cut off from the arsenal; and what could be attempted without arms? What chance had we against a soldiery inflamed to a pitch of frenzy by reports and tales of blood and murder, as absurd as they were atrocious? such as a plan for Genoese Vespers, of barracks to be fired, and a general massacre of the Piedmontese in them, of bands

of galley-slaves to be let loose to do their will on the city: these, and such like statements, which the local authorities had the impudence shortly after to confirm in a public proclamation, were widely circulated by police agents and spies, and found credence. All the guards at the different posts were at the same time doubled, cannon planted on all the important points, troops marshalled in every direction, the forts of Castelletto and San Giorgio prepared to batter down the town at a moment's warning. Our time for action was past beyond recall.

What circumstance, or rather, what chain of circumstances, had led to the deplorable consequences we have just related? We will state the facts in a few words. Politics had had no share whatever in the imprisonment of the two serjeants. The Government, as we said, was on the watch, but had not the least idea that one of the men in their grasp belonged to that very Association they were searching after. The one of the two who had wounded the other pretty seriously, was a step lower in rank, a circumstance which aggravated his situation very considerably. Being made aware of this in the course of his examinations, he determined to take advantage of a confidential communication which his comrade, in an open-hearted moment had made to him, to establish a claim, if not to impunity, at least to leniency. He deposed therefore, that his companion had formerly given him significant hints, concerning a secret society, to which he—the wounded companion—belonged, and to which he had offered to get the deponent admitted. I leave the reader to imagine

all that was done in consequence of this deposition with the implicated serjeant, to get him to make some disclosures. He was a stout-hearted man, and held out bravely at first, against both promises and threats. An infamous artifice, as old as despotism itself, but one which seldom fails in its effect on uncultivated minds, was then had recourse to. Forged depositions were read to the man, supposed to be from his most intimate friends, in which they accused him without pity or reserve, and then it was said to him, "See now, do men who have so little consideration for you deserve that you should sacrifice yourself for them?" The poor fellow swallowed the bait, and made a complete confession, giving the names of all the persons he knew, and even of some whom he only suspected of belonging to the Association. Among these last was my brother, whom he had seen more than once in Vittorio's rooms, and whose name he must have picked up by chance.

Imagine a sportsman going out to start a fox, and finding himself suddenly face to face with a bear. The Government on this occasion was precisely in such a predicament. They had found more than they had looked for. The army itself, that palladium of the ruling powers, and bulwark of the State, was undermined to an alarming extent! The men at the head of affairs felt the serious importance of the crisis, and acted accordingly. A plan was conceived and carried into execution with such secrecy, that even our friend in the police had not the slightest scent of it. Care was taken not to alarm the conspirators, or to put them on their guard by any partial

measures; on the contrary, it was so contrived that it should be rumoured, both in the corps to which the two serjeants belonged, and through the town, that they would soon be set at liberty. A strict watch was in the meanwhile set upon the parties informed against, and strict note taken of the persons with whom they had intercourse. To this list were added the names of several citizens known for their hostility to the Government, and then at a given time all were seized at one stroke.

But this was not all. It was of paramount importance to set the soldiers against the citizens, so as to secure the co-operation of the former. This task was easy enough. The old grudge between the Genoese and Piedmontese was smouldering, but not extinguished: it was thought advisable to use every means to rekindle this animosity. By what infernal arts this object was attained, the reader is aware.

The Association, although stunned, held together courageously for a time. But when it came to be known that arrests had taken place in every part of the kingdom; when imprisonments, far from slackening, became more frequent every day; when rumours were rife on every side of important revelations having been obtained from some of the prisoners, (rumours in part well founded, in part purposely exaggerated,) distrust crept in among its members, then discouragement, and at last, terror. Some of our friends concealed themselves, some took to flight. Many came to us and asked for means to place themselves in safety. How could we provide for the safety of every one? We aided, however, in as far as we

could, the escape of the most deeply compromised. We urged upon the rest the necessity of avoiding to draw down by a rash step, the vengeance of the Government upon the relations and friends they left behind. We had many losses to deplore in our ranks, it was true; those whom we might term our officers had been cruelly decimated; but the bulk of our army was safe, and we must reserve it for better days. We were as much implicated, to say the least, as any of them, and yet we remained at our post. Let them do the same.

Alas! we had done to the best of our powers to guide the vessel into a safe port; but it was otherwise ordained, the vessel was sinking fast. What more could we do than sink along with it? This we conceived to be our duty, and we stuck to it. Oh! what days of intense agony were those! I cannot think of them without shuddering, even now. How often did I envy the fate of Cæsar! How often at night, when I laid me down, weary and despairing, did I hope, earnestly hope, that the carabineers would come for me, and end my misery!

I have said above, that the rumours of revelations made by some of the prisoners, were well founded. Alas! it was but too true; some of our friends had not been proof against the tortures inflicted upon them. Honour to those who were enabled to resist! but let us not be too severe upon those who yielded. Let us rather reserve our indignation for that immoral Government, whose agents did not hesitate to act the part of inquisitors and torturers towards their fellow-creatures.

I shall borrow some details illustrative of this subject from a work already cited.*

The unhappy prisoners were systematically weakened by insufficient and unhealthy food. They were startled from their sleep at night by appalling and lugubrious sounds. Voices called out under their windows, "One of your companions has been shot to-day, and to-morrow it will be your turn." When their physical strength had thus been reduced, and their imagination wrought upon, they were either suddenly brought up for examination, or a daughter, a sister, or a mother in tears, was admitted.

Sometimes two friends were placed in contiguous cells, and permitted to communicate with one another. Several days would elapse, during which certain ill-boding hints would be dropped to the one whom it was wished to impress, concerning the impending fate of his friend and fellow-prisoner. Shortly afterwards, the door of the neighbouring cell would be noisily opened, a sound of steps would be heard, followed by a death-like silence, and presently a discharge of musketry in the court of the prison! By such means was it that avowals or revelations, often false, were extorted.

Francesco Miglio, a serjeant of the pioneers in the regiment of the guards, had eluded by his firmness and presence of mind all the insidious inquisitorial attempts to which he had been subjected. He was then shut up with a pretended fellow-prisoner, who confided to him with tears his participation in the sect, and the terror he was in. Miglio was struck

* Storia del Piemonte, di A. Brofferio. Parte terza. Capo terzo.

with pity, and a certain friendship sprang up between him and the new comer. A few days afterwards this new friend assured Miglio, that he had a means of correspondence with some of his own relations. Miglio allowed himself to be induced to entrust him with a note for one of his friends. There being no ink, he opened a vein and wrote a few lines with his blood. This scrap of paper was produced against him, and decided his fate. Poor Miglio was shot!

One prisoner condemned at Alexandria, and who survived a long confinement in the Fort of Fenestrelle, left in his memoirs the following passage:—"First of all, my books were taken from me, viz., a bible, a collection of prayers, and the history of the celebrated Capuchins of Piedmont. They then put a chain round my ankle, and I was led into a cell still darker, damper, and more squalid, than the one I had hitherto occupied, with a double-barred window, and a door with a double lock. Opposite to this was the cell of the unfortunate Vochieri, another political prisoner. As his door was left open, I could see through a chink in mine, what went on there. Vochieri was seated upon a wooden stool, with a heavy chain round his ankle, and two guards, one on each side, with drawn swords; a third, with his firelock, was stationed before the door. The profound silence kept was awful. The soldiers seemed in greater consternation than the prisoner himself. From time to time an old Capuchin came to visit him. Thus did this unfortunate man pass a whole week. His dying agonies were indeed long and frightful. At last he was led to execution!"

General Galateri, the Governor of Alexandria, persisted up to the last moment, in efforts to obtain revelations from him, holding out the lure of a possible pardon. "Deliver me from your odious presence," answered Vochieri; "this is the only favour I request." The enraged Governor gave him a violent kick in the belly. Vochieri bound as he was, spit in his face. Through a refinement of cruelty almost incredible, he was made to pass on his way to execution under the windows of his own home, that his wife, his sister, and his two young sons might witness the heart-rending sight. Not soldiers, but *guardaciurme*, the guards of the galley-slaves, were chosen to shoot him, and the Governor, in full uniform, thought fit to be present at the execution, seated on a cannon.

But I perceive I am anticipating events. Let us turn our eyes from these horrors, and pray to God, that the times in which they could be committed, may never more return.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

NARROW ESCAPE; I AM PREVAILED UPON TO LOOK TO MY SAFETY.

ONE evening in the beginning of June I was returning home—it could not have been ten o'clock, and yet the streets were nearly empty, the shops all closed, and the dismal loneliness unbroken, save by the frequent challenge of the sentinel, and the measured tread of carabineers patrolling in pairs.

I went on with heavy step, and a still heavier heart. Each of the days of the preceding month had brought with it a new load of evil. Fresh imprisonments had taken place in Genoa, Turin, Alexandria, Chambery, Nice, Mondovi, and Coni. The commission of inquiry appointed by the king had determined that the prisoners should be tried by court-martial.

The Prince d'Urbino had had a very narrow escape. Going home a few evenings previously he had found his house full of carabineers, sent to arrest him. With great presence of mind he re-closed the door, thus shutting them in, and made with all speed for the port; finding himself, however, hotly pursued, he leapt into the sea and swam out to an English vessel lying at anchor. Another of our friends when about to be seized swallowed poison, and left only a corpse to be carried away.

Lost in the sad thoughts suggested by these gloomy events, I took the turning that led into the street of San Luca, one of the narrowest and busiest of the town during the day, but solitary enough at night, intending to pass by Banchi. During the last few minutes I had heard a step behind me, but paid no attention to it, until the pertinacity of my follower, in always keeping at the same pace with myself, whether I went fast or slow, began to arouse my suspicion. Anxious to ascertain if there really was some one dogging me, I turned suddenly back; not quickly enough, however, to overtake or even catch a glimpse of my pursuer, who, in the meantime seemed to have vanished. I resumed my walk, now quite on the *qui vive*, and on reaching the Piazza of San Giorgio I saw a group of people standing there, whom I made out to be four Carabineers, with two persons in plain clothes.

I no sooner saw these men than the conviction flashed on me, that they were looking out for me; in short, I felt that my hour had come. Not that I expected to be taken on the spot. As yet there had been no instance of any one being arrested in the open street. What I made sure of was, that these very men would be at our house almost as soon as myself, and with the undoubted purpose of seizing my person. In fact, they did allow me to pass unquestioned and unmolested.

If, in the interval between seeing them and reaching home, any transient doubt of their purpose had crossed my mind, the sight of persons standing in every doorway of the

street in which we lived—evidently on the watch for something or some one, would have dispelled it. The recollection was fresh in my memory that just such had been the case on the night of my brother Cæsar's arrest, and I remembered hearing a neighbour relate, that he had overheard one of the police scouts say to the other, "He's gone in," and that almost immediately afterwards the emissaries of the law had crowded into our house.

One of those childish whimsical impulses which do sometimes so unaccountably rise and govern men's minds even on the most solemn occasions, seized upon me at that moment; and, amid a confusion of painful and exciting thoughts, I must confess that the uppermost was how I could prevent the success of the same manœuvre a second time.

Full of this idea, when I came to my own door, instead of going in I passed it, and went on to where I knew there was a dark archway, through which I suddenly darted, rushing down first one turning and then another. In the labyrinth of ill-lighted narrow streets that characterize all the ancient cities of Italy, I soon distanced the persons who, upon seeing me pass the house, had begun to pursue me.

I heard one step, however, gaining on me, and being by this time too much out of breath to run any farther, I slipped quietly into one of the pitch-dark doorways at hand. My pursuers passed close by, but never thought of looking into my hiding-place. I waited patiently until even the faint echo of footsteps had died away, and only then venturing cautiously out, in little more than a minute reached

our own house, round which I had described a semicircle, and stole in unperceived.

I went at once to my mother's room, for it was my invariable custom to see her before going to bed, and to talk over with her the occurrences of the day. Anxiety and sadness had indeed long usurped the place of the cheerfulness that once used to brighten that hour, but it was nevertheless as dear to us in sorrow as it had been in gladness. How was I to tell my poor mother that even this consolation was to be taken from her; how prepare her to see another son dragged to prison?

There was no help for it, however, and I must behold her agony. The smile with which she welcomed me very nearly upset all the fortitude I had been striving to gain.

I scarcely know what I said, or what passed between us. Who can remember the broken words of such bitter moments? Every mother's heart at least will understand, and throb with sympathy for the anguish of that hour.

Let me say it with filial pride, my mother's character was no common one. Its distinguishing feature was a piety so true, so real, so humble, that she scarcely knew herself to be pious. Hers was a spirit that never flinched before daily self-sacrifice. Such a woman, after the first outburst of agony, would know how to control the evidences of the emotions of a heart as tender as ever beat in woman's breast; and so indeed she did.

Since I had resolved on making no attempt at either concealment or flight, she sought, by lavishing on me all that

divine tenderness with which God has gifted a mother's heart, to strengthen and console me. All that her too sad experience could suggest for my future comfort, was done quietly and unobtrusively. I knew that she put into my purse all the little gold that was in the house, and, mindful even of my habit of smoking, she gave me the requisites for striking a light. Trifles! but proofs of mighty self-control in a mother so situated. Vain cares they would be, alas! for a poor prisoner was allowed no money, no smoking, and everything that could in the least administer to his comfort was pitilessly snatched from him.

At her suggestion, I took a crust of bread and a glass of wine, and then we sat down side by side to await the issue. Moments of such intense thought and emotion rarely give birth to outward demonstrations.

We were not left long in suspense; a loud ringing at the door soon startled us. "Courage, my mother!" I exclaimed, clasping her in my arms, "the moment of trial is come!" She broke from my hold, and throwing herself on her knees before a picture of the Madonna and her Holy Child, which hung from the wall, "Mother of Mercy!" she cried, with a fervency most touching to witness, "spare me, oh! spare me *this* one; but now and ever, the will of God be done!"

By the time we reached the hall, my mother had recovered her composure. Old Caterina, aghast at the sight of the unexpected and unwelcome visitors, crept softly and slowly to our side. Santina, on the contrary, nothing daunted, with fierce distended eyes, and inflated nostrils, stood erect, con-

fronting the two commissaries of police, who were a little in advance of four carabineers. I myself, my mother, and my youngest brother, stopped opposite to them; the dead, threatening silence broken only by the unconnected words of prayer which Caterina kept murmuring. As far as the faint glare of two small brass lamps would allow me to see, the countenances of the carabineers and their companions were strikingly pale. Probably some of the former (the latter were both new faces) had, not many nights previously, come on a similar errand; and it is only justice to humanity to suppose, that even in hearts hardened by long habit to look on misery unmoved, there may have vibrated some chord of sympathy for the agonized mother they saw before them for the second time.

Be this as it may, we remained for some minutes facing each other in utter silence, like hostile armies awaiting the signal of attack. My father now joined us, evidently much alarmed. I did succeed at last in making him understand, by several expressive gestures, that it was his part to speak. He then addressed the elder of the two civil officers, and demanded to be informed of the reason of this domiciliary visit.

Like a ghost, who, it is said, must be spoken to ere it can speak, the commissary advanced a step or two, drew forth a long paper, and began to read as follows:—

"By order of his Excellency the Governor of Genoa, the Commissary of Police of the Second Division is desired to proceed to the immediate arrest of the person of Signor Camillo Benoni, barrister-at-law."

The half-suppressed cry which involuntarily burst from my mother's lips, interrupted the reader, who looked round somewhat perplexed. I had already stepped forward, and was about to speak, when the younger of the police officers passed quickly behind me, and said, in so low and rapid a whisper that I rather guessed than heard the words, "*Tacete, ne va la vita!*"—"Hush! your life is at stake!"

One moment before, my situation had been so desperate that to have entertained a thought or hope of escape, would have been pronounced insanity; and now, by a lucky chance, or I ought rather to say through the mercy of God, a door of safety was opened to me. My eldest brother's name (I have already mentioned his being also a barrister) had, by some inexplicable blunder, been substituted for mine. As he had ever been a stranger to all our plots and conspiracies, though he might be detained in prison till the mistake of names had been verified, no serious danger was to be apprehended for him.

This consideration, and my mother's eloquent though mute entreaties, shut my mouth, and induced me to let matters take their course. My brother's bed-room being at the farthest end of an upper story, he had heard no noise, and was sleeping quietly, when my father, closely followed by two carabineers, and the younger of the police officers, went to him, and desired him to get up. In spite of the sharp watch kept over them, my father managed to let him know, in a few hurried words, the mistake which, for the present, was to cost him his liberty.

Camillo willingly obeyed the summons, gave up all his papers, in which he knew that nothing could be found to incriminate him, and, with a heart lighter than prisoners can usually boast, went off to prison in my stead. I may as well mention here, that he remained in confinement much longer than we had anticipated. Some months indeed elapsed before he was set at liberty.

This incident had fully awakened my mother to a sense of the dangers which menaced me, and the next morning she spoke to me—oh! so earnestly. She represented, that still to persist in remaining in Genoa after what had happened, was more than madness; it was opposing the will of God, who had blinded my enemies to save me; that what I considered my duty towards my companions in danger and misfortune, ought not to make me entirely overlook what I owed to a mother already more than sufficiently tried, and to the rest of my family.

Her arguments, but still more the tears and supplications with which they were seconded, had already, to a certain degree, shaken my resolution, when in came uncle John, who, to my mother's prayers and remonstrances, added his own. He had that morning seen one of his friends, the magistrate of whom I have once before spoken. This gentleman had called on my uncle for the express purpose of informing him that the police had already got scent of the mistake of the preceding evening. If I did not get out of the way without delay, I was lost past redemption.

Alfred, and a few more friends who had the courage to

gather round us in this hour of peril, pressed me earnestly to go. "Would the sacrifice of my life," they urged, "in any way benefit or tend to the safety of those for whose sake I considered it my duty to remain? I had given ample proofs of courage and devotedness to the cause for which we had joined together; no shadow of blame could attach to me if I yielded to the prayers of my mother, and to the wishes of my friends."

I was still hesitating, when I was told that a lady desired to see me on pressing business. I gave orders that she should be shewn into my little study, and went at once to see who it could be.

As I entered the room, the lady took off her veil. It was Lilla, as my heart had already guessed. I could not suppress a hasty exclamation of surprise, not at her unexpected visit, but at the alteration in her looks.

She was pale, haggard, emaciated, looking ten years older than when I had last seen her.

"I hope you will excuse my intrusion," she began in a hurried voice, "on account of the motive that brings me. There is no time for either ceremony or reserve. You are to be arrested this very evening; Alberto heard it from the governor's own lips not half an hour ago. There is no time to lose. I have brought my servant with me on purpose. You must change clothes with him and come home with me. For a short while you will be safe with us."

All this had been uttered in a breath. I was going to answer, but she gave me no time.

"For God's sake make no objections, or—O Lorenzo! have mercy on me, for I am in utter despair;" she burst into tears and sobbed aloud.

I took advantage of the moment of calm which followed this passionate outbreak, and said, "Listen to me, Lilla;—at the very moment you came I had almost consented to leave Genoa; the news you bring decides me. I promise you faithfully that before dark this evening I will leave this house; I have thought of a place where I shall be tolerably safe, until I can manage to quit the city altogether. Do not think that I refuse your assistance because it is you who offer it; believe me, there is no one from whom I would so willingly accept a favour or kindness as from yourself; but what I neither ought to do nor will do, is to run the risk of bringing you or your noble brother into danger or difficulty on my account."

I saw that she was about to remonstrate, so I hastily added, "No, no, Lilla, say no more on this subject, do not agitate yourself and me by a useless discussion. I again repeat my promise of seeking some safer abode than this house, and that before dark. My poor suffering child," I could not forbear the words, as she turned her piteous pale face towards me; "spare me a little in your turn: this is a moment of bitter agony to me, to us both; do not unman me, and make me unable for the terrible struggle that is before me. Think of my poor mother, Lilla."

She bowed her head over her hands: then made me promise to send Alfred to her the next morning that she might have some tidings of me.

"God bless you, Lilla! for my sake remember my many unfortunate fellow-sufferers; many need help." By this time I had supported her to the door, she turned to me, while a shudder ran through her whole frame, saying, "Ah, Lorenzo! *this* is more than a bad dream." I just caught the sound of, "Farewell, Lorenzo," and she was gone—my poor Lilla!

A few hours afterwards I left home to take refuge in the house of Santina's elder sister, who was married to a Genoese, and lived in the populous Quartiere of Prè. To eke out their means they let some of their spare rooms to work-people and day-labourers, and we considered it as a place in which a new lodger was not likely to attract attention or excite suspicion. It afforded me, besides, the advantage of a safe mode of communication with my family through Santina, who was in the habit of frequently visiting her sister.

I knew that I might depend on the fidelity of the whole family; and I decided, therefore, to remain with them until the necessary measures could be taken for my escape.

Of the anguish of the parting hour I shall not say a word. Certainly the human heart is a wonderful piece of workmanship, to stand such shocks without going to pieces.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

AFTER BEING TRIED IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE, THE FUGITIVE EMBARKS FOR THE COAST OF FRANCE.

DURING the first day of my concealment I received a letter and a purse of gold, both from Lilla. The letter was a long and most touching one, in which she frankly acknowledged all her faults towards me, and prayed for pardon, in token of my granting which she begged me to accept the money which she sent. "It may be of use to you," she wrote, "in the new and precarious situation in which you are about to be placed."

I answered this letter in words prompted by my heart—gratefully and affectionately, but I declined the money, alleging the truth, that my father and uncle John had supplied me with a sum far beyond my need. I prayed Lilla not to forget my parting recommendation of those of my fellow-sufferers who might be in a position to require pecuniary aid. I told her also not to attribute my refusal to pride or resentment; "I would keep the purse and one of the gold pieces in remembrance of her."

It took three days to find men willing and able to convey me out of the country, even with the certainty of receiving a good round sum for their services. A passport also having been procured under a false name, other minor difficulties

being overcome, and the few preparations for my comfort that my perilous situation permitted being concluded, late in the afternoon of the third day, the person who had undertaken to land me safely on the French coast came to me with a bundle of sailor's clothes, this being the disguise which had been chosen.

He told me it had been agreed upon between himself and his men, that in any danger—whether of discovery or only of suspicion—I was to pass for an English gentleman bent on a fishing excursion; to corroborate which assertion suitable clothes were to be placed in the boat in which I was to embark.

This man, whom, as he commanded our expedition, I shall in future always call the captain, is worthy of a few words of description. He was a tall, sun-burnt, fine-looking fellow, about thirty years of age, with a profusion of black hair and whiskers, and would have been decidedly handsome but for a cast in one eye. His whole person, voice, attitude, and gesture bespoke energy, resolution, and indifference to danger, which, indeed, in his adventurous life—that of a smuggler—he had so often been called on to face, as to have grown somewhat reckless and defiant of it. To complete my sketch, I must add that he was never seen without a cigar between his lips. When not lighted he held it caressingly, as it had been a flower, in the left corner of his mouth, amusing himself by alternate chewing and spitting.

I dressed myself, as he directed, in a checked shirt, white trousers, and glazed hat, and hastened back to the room in

which I had left him with my host and hostess, and Santina, who had come to see me off. The captain was in a hurry, and my parting words were few.

"Thank you, Maria—thank you, Luigi—God bless you, and good bye, Santina!" I stooped down to embrace her, as I had done the others; but Santina pushed me violently back, saying, "Do you think you can break a heart, and heal it with a kiss and a God bless you?"

"Why, what is the matter with you, Santina?" I asked, startled, and only then noticing her wild looks and quivering lip.

"You are not really going away, are you?"

For answer, I pointed to my new equipment.

"Why need you go?" she continued in a higher tone; "can't you stay here?—who will think of looking for you here? We will take care no harm comes to you; and if it comes to the worst, you have committed no crime; they can do nothing to you."

"Oh! nothing but hang him!" said the captain, bluntly.

Santina started, and then, after a pause, muttered, "Well, let him go, then—let him go; the sooner the better. Go!" she said, turning to me, and she sunk upon a stool, staring at the wall with vacant eyes, the very picture of despair.

The captain motioned to me to go at once. I felt that time pressed; still I could not resolve to leave the poor girl without a word of consolation. I was dreadfully perplexed at this unforeseen difficulty.

"Why can't I go with you?" said Santina, suddenly jump-

ing up, her features brightening; "why can't I go with you? You cannot do without a servant, go where you will; and suppose you were ill, who is to take care of you, and to nurse you? Oh! *do* let me go with you!"

I had to argue the matter with her, and, in point of logic, very often had the worst of the argument. I pleaded her youth, my youth, the talk of the world, the certain loss of her character. She did not understand, poor soul, how and why being young, and staying with me, could injure her reputation.

"Was I not her master? was she not my servant? had she not been so for years? Well, then, if she did lose her character, she should care very little. Let people think what they liked; where there was no harm, there was no shame. Was it not so?"

Another of my objections was the scantiness of my means. I should have scarcely enough for one; how, then, provide for two? Even as I uttered the words, I felt how paltry they sounded, used as an argument against a warm and disinterested affection like hers. God knows they were dictated by a sense of duty to this innocent, loving heart.

Santina had her answer ready. "She wanted no wages; she could cook, mend my linen, be useful in a hundred ways; she was sure she should be a saving to me."

I spoke to her of my mother. I told her what confidence I had in her affection and devotion to that poor bereaved mother. I prayed her not to desert the afflicted woman.

These words seemed to have some effect upon her. She

listened attentively, and without answering. The thought of my mother in her loneliness made her waver.

The captain again whispered to me that we must go, or we should miss the men he had hired. Santina looked so calm and collected, that I thought I had better take advantage of the moment, and be gone. A few hurried words, a parting kiss, and I walked towards the door. But before I had reached it, Santina was on the floor in strong convulsions.

The long pent-up passion of her nature burst forth with fearful intensity. The combined efforts of the four persons present, three of whom were strong young men, could hardly control the frantic movements of this slender girl. It was frightful to see the clenched teeth, the distorted features of the poor thing—to see her body writhe and twist, the veins of her throat and face swelled to bursting; but more frightful to remember, that all this physical suffering arose from a moral cause.

Now and then exhausted nature would grant a respite, and then the poor sufferer would bemoan herself in such touching words, that every eye—even those of the captain, though all unused to the melting mood—were moist with tears.

"Ah me! ah me!" she said, "what have I done to deserve this great pain? Madonna Santa! is it a sin to love one's own master? It is not my fault if I cannot bear to see him go away. It breaks my heart; it does indeed. He was such a good master, so gentle. He taught me to read and write; he was never harsh to me, never scolded me, never so much

as frowned upon me. His voice was like music to me. What wonder, then, that I learned to love him? I must have had no heart! I know that he is a gentleman, and that I am only a poor servant; but what of that? Such as I am I can serve and love him. All I ask is only to see him—yes, to see him every day. That is not much, but it is everything to me!"

And in this strain she would go on until the fit again seized her.

I profited by the first interval of calmness to take the captain aside, and tell him that my leaving the poor creature in this state was out of the question, but that I would go on the morrow if circumstances would allow me; that he must have everything in readiness, and call for me again at dusk. He made no objection, and shortly after took his leave. I then went to Santina, and told her that I had given up all thoughts for the present of going away—indeed, of going at any time, unless she gave her consent.

The effect of this announcement was instantaneous. Her features, hitherto so contracted by spasms, at once relaxed. She said not a word, but she took my hand, kissed it, and looked up thankfully in my face. The paroxysms having ceased, we made her a little couch with chairs and pillows; and there she lay, with her eyes closed, weeping silently. Once or twice her sister remonstrated with her for crying, but Santina answered, "Let me cry; it does me good. I shall be more reasonable by and bye."

So she went on weeping and slumbering, ever and anon

starting up with the question, "Is he gone?" but on hearing my voice, relapsing again into her quiet mood.

A little after twelve o'clock, she fell asleep, and slept for nearly two hours. Her sister and her sister's husband had long been fast asleep on a mattress on the floor. When she awoke, she asked what o'clock it was. I told her; and then she begged me to come to her, and in a whisper that was scarcely audible—she was so worn out, poor young thing—she said—

"You *must* go. I should never forgive myself if, on my account——" She did not complete the sentence, but a shudder that came over her shewed the current of her thoughts. "You *must* go, and without any more delay. Promise me that you will." I promised. "I know you will forgive me for having been so foolish, and you will pardon, too, all the trouble I have given you; indeed, I could not help it—I knew not what I was doing. As for your dear mother, do not be uneasy. I will stay with her, and will do for her all that I would do for yourself. God for ever bless you for all your kindness to me! Now, go and take some rest."

I said I felt no inclination to sleep, and would rather remain with her; but she insisted, and I went away to my own little room. It was long before I could close my eyes. When I got up in the morning at seven o'clock, Santina was gone—had been gone for hours: she had walked home, accompanied by her sister and brother-in-law. "She was still weak," they said, "but calm."

Gentle, devoted, self-controlling Santina! May God temper the wind to thee, poor shorn lamb!

At dusk the captain reappeared, and leaving the house arm-in-arm, we soon reached "Sottoripa." This species of tunnel, into which light is admitted only through loop-holes small and far between, is dismal and gloomy enough even at midday, but at the hour at which we entered it, was pitch-dark. We were groping our way along, quickly enough, when we stumbled against a figure standing in the middle of our path.

"Whoever you may be, get out of the way!" growled the captain.

"It is I!" exclaimed a voice well known to me.

"You, Alfred!" I exclaimed, "how kind of you."

"Yes, it is I," he whispered, "but I am not alone."

At the same time, I felt two small, cold hands seeking mine, and a voice, inarticulate with sobs, that came from the level of my knees, and went straight to my heart, murmured, "Oh! say that you forgive me! say that you forgive me!"

"I do forgive you, and with all my heart," whispered I, raising her gently, and pressing her to my bosom: it was Lilla. "God bless you, my child, as I bless you from my soul!" and as I said so, I parted her ringlets, and kissed her forehead. It was the first kiss I had ever given her.

The captain began to show visible symptoms of impatience; he urged me forward, and we passed on.

By the time we reached Ponte Reale it was quite dusk.

To get to the place of embarkation we had to pass through a narrow wicket, close to a custom-house officer, and to do this it was necessary to step over a high board. Pre-occupied and anxious as I was, I did not observe this obstacle, and consequently stumbled over it.

"A bad omen, Sir!" exclaimed the officer, little suspecting how laden with sad meaning his words sounded in the ear of the fugitive. Somewhat vexed, but now thoroughly roused from my torpor, I hastened after the captain, who, just as we were stepping into the small boat that was waiting for us, whispered to me, "Always speak Italian, never Genoese." These words seemed to imply such a want of confidence in his crew, that they made an unfortunately sinister impression on me; and I set out, not only much depressed, but tormented by a new and vague suspicion.

The wide expanse of the port and all that part of the city which crowds round its vast semi-circle, lay hid in deep shade, but the high towers of Carignano and the ramparts of Santa Chiara rose vividly before me, bathed in the warm and glorious light of an Italian moon. I fixed my eyes on these familiar objects with the intense gaze and all the feelings of a man who was to look on them no more.

The boat had been provided with fishing tackle, to give a colour of truth to the story of my pretended whim for a fishing excursion. Outside the port a larger and faster boat was to meet us, furnished with provisions for our voyage to France.

By some blunder or accident the boat was not waiting for

us, and, in this unforeseen dilemma, we had no better alternative than to keep tacking, in the hope that it might soon make its appearance. Unfortunately our manœuvres attracted the attention of the guarda-costa or revenue cutter, always on the look-out for smugglers, and I was not a little alarmed at seeing her bear down upon us. When sufficiently near, the officer on duty ordered us to lie to, and sent some of the custom-house men, armed with enormous trombones, on board of us. They searched each hole and corner, overhauling everything they could lay their hands on; but finding nothing to warrant their detaining us, they returned to the cutter, leaving us free to follow our own course.

The boat, however, without which it was impossible to carry through our project, was nowhere to be seen, and the captain was consulting with me as to what was to be done in this emergency, when, lo and behold, our custom-house enemy again appeared close to us.

In spite of the visit and examination to which we had already been subjected, the revenue officer, who had recognised in the captain a notorious smuggler, could not divest himself of suspicions, excited by our unaccountable manœuvres, and acting on the strength of these doubts, he commanded us, in terms that admitted of neither reply nor delay, to return to shore.

In the short interval that occurred, the captain did his best to keep up my courage, protesting that there was no danger if I would trust entirely to his management, and remain silent and passive; which my character as a stranger,

almost altogether ignorant of the language of the country, authorized and rendered natural. Not to speak was easy enough, but to prevent my countenance from betraying the feelings that agitated me, was a sufficiently difficult task. Fortunately I was not required to appear, and could remain in the boat with the man and boy, who for the present constituted our crew.

The captain went alone to the inspecting officer; and we were so near the shore that I could hear my friend expostulating, remonstrating, and explaining with a bold volubility that began to reanimate my hope of escape. It was on this occasion that I first discovered the captain's peculiar talent for swearing; indeed, in the course of our further acquaintance, I found that he could not say four successive words on any subject—love, war, or commerce—without interlarding them with oaths, that would have been ridiculous if they had not been frightful.

In this case his peculiar eloquence succeeded, for he returned to us with the news that we were at liberty to pursue our course. The two circumstances—first, that of the non-appearance of the larger boat, and, secondly, our compulsory return to land, had evidently determined the captain to make some change in his plans: so at least I judged from the whispering that took place between him and the man he had left in the boat with me, who immediately afterwards leapt on shore, and was soon out of sight. The boy was desired to row us to the landing-place of the Lanterna or light-house. When we got there the captain told me we

had better walk to San Pier d'Arena, a large suburb of Genoa, about half a mile from where we then were.

I made no remark, nor did I ever ask for any explanation. My mind was in that state which made me feel it a relief to be treated as if I were a machine or bale of goods. We walked on in silence to San Pier d'Arena, and when the captain sat down on the beach, I followed his example with the same lethargic resignation I had shewn and felt as to everything since leaving Genoa. Thick-coming thoughts coursed through my brain, graven still on my memory, but incapable of being rendered into words, like the multitude of faces one sees passing in a crowd, or peopling our dreams, distinctly present to our inward sense, but which, when we attempt to delineate them for others, elude our grasp as shadows which a child seeks to catch. Home, country, friends, all so dear and yet so distant! The soil that I trode once more, and which I thought I had left for ever, burned my feet. There was no repose, no rest for me, as I lay stretched on the bosom of my native land; there was only a voice of wo echoing through my soul, like the wind as it sighs and wails through the forest on its errand of desolation.

From this sad and bitter state I was roused by the captain, who pointed out to me the little boat we had left at the Lanterna, close into the beach in front of us, with a person standing up in it making signals to us. "There is no time to lose!" said he. We both ran as fast as we could, and stepped in; the captain himself taking a pair of oars we were soon alongside of the cutter, which had so disappointed

us, and, leaping on board, at length set out for our destined port in France.

In spite of all these delays and interruptions it was not much past eleven o'clock when we left San Pier d'Arena. The night was so calm, that there was scarce a ripple on the sea; it was therefore of no use to set the sails, and the men continued to row, keeping very close to the shore. Towards dawn we began to feel the breeze coming up; the sails were hoisted, and very soon I became sensible of the accelerated motion of the boat. The moon had shone brightly throughout the night, and the tall column of the Lanterna, hitherto distinctly visible to me, now gradually faded from before my eyes, which strained to see it long after it had quite vanished from sight. It was then that I felt in its full entireness that I was a fugitive. So long as I saw that well-known object, I certainly had not realized the idea that I was absolutely and utterly without either home or country; that perhaps I should never again behold my mother's face. Till one has experienced it, one knows not all the consoling power of association that lies in familiar inanimate objects. When I lost sight of the Lanterna, it was as if I had again been torn from the arms of those so dear to me, and a host of recollections crowded round me of past happy days, days of youth, of joy, of hope, such as could never more return for the exiled man. The die was cast; I was proscribed, a wanderer on the wide world; nay, my very life and liberty were no longer in my own power, they were in the hands of the men before me.

As this thought crossed me, I turned to observe them more narrowly than I had yet done. Besides the captain, there were two men and the boy I have already mentioned. Only one of these persons made any unpleasant impression on me; the boy and one of the men had insignificant commonplace countenances, but the other was not one to be overlooked even in a crowd. He was on the foremost thwart, and consequently directly opposite and very near to me.

Who has not at one period or other of his life felt a serious and unaccountable discomfort in the presence of a person seen for the first time?—a discomfort felt before one has had time for even the most rapid analysis of physiognomy or manner. Who does not understand those instinctive repugnances, carried sometimes so far that our mental faculties are paralyzed if we are compelled to remain long in the society of certain individuals, though we avoid either intercourse or contact with them?

This was my case, when, awaking from the thoughts that had till then absorbed me, I began to examine my companions, and my eyes fell on this man. His low retiring forehead, his bristling red hair—his mouth, on which a continual sneer seemed chiselled, brought back to my recollection a bravo in one of Mrs. Radcliffe's romances, "The Black Confessional," the delight of my boyhood. The name of this bravo was Spalatro, and I at once baptized the man before me by that name. From the expression of his cruel eye as it met mine, I am sure that my instinctive feeling of antipathy was more than fully returned. After that first glance he always avoided

looking at me, except when he thought I was otherwise engaged.

We had sailed on for some time in silence, when, from some accidental movement of mine, my purse, which was full of gold, fell out of my pocket, and some of the money was scattered about the boat. A general scramble ensued to catch the coin before it should roll under the planks; it was all found and given back to me with good-natured alacrity, except by Spalatro, on whose face there was an expression not to be mistaken, of avarice and covetousness, as he handed me what he had picked up. The bustle occasioned by this little incident soon subsided, and the silence was unbroken save by the creaking of the mast, the straining of the ropes, or an occasional ominous flap of one or other of the sails. The weather was evidently changing, and that for the worse. The boat before long began to pitch, and reel, and rock, quivering as the waves came with a thud against its low sides; yet I, who all my life had been a martyr to sea-sickness, felt in this instance perfectly well, and able to smoke with the same tranquillity as these veteran sea-dogs my companions. I must have owed this exemption from bodily suffering to the extreme tension and pre-occupation of my mind.

After some time, however, I began to observe that the faces around me wore signs of some uneasiness; there were eager looks at the sky, then at the waves, over which we were literally bounding, and most anxious glances at the captain,—a sort of silent appeal that remained apparently unnoticed, certainly unanswered, for he continued to smoke as if uncon-

scious that there were such things as threatening clouds, howling winds, and raging seas. At length, after we had been for some minutes scudding before the wind with alarming velocity, he ordered the sails to be lowered and the men to take to their oars. This order seemed to break the spell which until now had kept the men silent. Spalatro was the spokesman, asking in a voice lowered to a whisper from concentrated passion, why we were not to endeavour to land until the squall had blown over? The captain for all answer desired him to mind his oars, and wait for orders; that it was his way to command and not to be commanded by his men. The rubicon was passed, and urged on by the instinct of self-preservation, now roused in all its intensity by the sight of our perilous situation, Spalatro in a loud voice, and his eyes red with hatred and vengeance fixed on me, swore he would not risk his life without knowing a reason why. The captain was now in a passion also. He rose up, made a cross of his two thumbs, kissed it fervently, and said, "By this holy sign you shall obey me: you agreed to go with me to France; you have received half the sum for which you hired yourself, and go you shall. It is a matter of life and death for this gentleman," pointing to me, "and that's the reason we cannot go on shore."

"You said when you engaged me," retorted Spalatro, glaring fiercely at me, "that he was a bankrupt escaping from his creditors. I guess the truth now; better that one perish than four."

As he said these words he flung down his oars, and the other

two seemed about to follow his example; but before they had time to do so the captain had sprung from my side, seized Spalatro by the collar, thrown him with a jerk fit to break his back into the bottom of the boat, and taking the pair of oars himself, began to row, making the boat bound at each stroke as if he had combined the strength of ten men in his two arms. The other sailors were cowed, and remained silent and active at their oars.

For more than two hours did this struggle continue between the tempest's force and the energy of man. At the end of that time the wind lulled, and though the waves still rose menacingly around us, it was clear that all immediate risk was over. The captain resumed his former place by me, motioning to Spalatro, who was sitting sulky and silent in the bottom of the boat, where he had fallen, to return to his duty. He obeyed with the dogged look of a cur that has been chastised by his master.

This disturbance caused a painful feeling of restraint amongst us, and clothed with a substantial form the vague suspicions which had assailed me on first entering the boat.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE FUGITIVE.

THE day wore tediously on in a monotony most trying to the spirits, even if body and mind be in a cheerful healthy state. To me it gave time to dwell exclusively on my many subjects of grief and dread.

As the shades of evening closed over us the feeling of discomfort which had harassed me during the day began to deepen into something more alarming and acute. My head was burning hot, my temples beat as if they would burst, convulsive shiverings shook my frame, my diseased imagination called up all sorts of fantastic and revolting pictures, on which my thoughts fixed themselves with gloomy pertinacity. In vain did I try to reason with myself—in vain did I exert myself to chase away those haunting demons—monstrous creations of a tottering brain. I had completely lost all control over myself. But, to understand how I had been brought to this state, without any sufficiently exciting cause since leaving Genoa, I must revert in a few words to the past.

The passiveness of my conduct from the night of my intended arrest up to the present moment must have struck every one. My anguish of heart and mind had, indeed, given

few visible signs, but my emotions had only been smothered; they had been working painfully and strongly under this coating of ice. The moment must inevitably come when these bitter waters of the soul would crack their brittle fragile covering, and like the terrible *débacles* of the physical world, ruin and ravage the territory of my reason.

This was the fifth night I had passed without sleep. The four days and nights I had been in concealment had been spent in that state of restlessness peculiar to persons who, under very exciting circumstances, such as would naturally call forth immediate action, are condemned to remain passive instruments in the hands of others. Almost all the hours of those weary days and nights I kept pacing up and down, to and fro, in the little room that had been assigned to me. Scarcely any solid food had passed my lips; I was too sick at heart to eat. To support my strength I now and then took a sip of white wine. How well I remember the little table on which the decanter and glass were placed, the scanty odd furniture, and the quaint mystical picture of the Madonna hanging at the head of the bed. My position was far from being a safe one; the merest trifle might render all our precautions useless; every fibre of my heart was thrilling with the agony of the farewell to my mother, added to which were grief and vexation at having been, however innocently, the cause of my brother Camillo's arrest, and that, too, at a moment when arrests were more frequent than liberations. I was, besides, uneasy about many dear friends and associates already imprisoned, or liable to be so at any moment.

But all these conflicting thoughts and sorrows were forgotten in the gnawing anxiety and terror that filled my heart on account of Cæsar, my friend and beloved companion from my boyhood until now. I had the most horrible presentiment as to his fate—presentiment is often but the prescience of love; and did I not too cruelly prove it so?

Let the reader bear in mind all this mental torture—let him recall the uninterrupted series of agitations I had endured within so short a period—let him consider the physical exhaustion in which I was from want of food and sleep; and he will not be astonished if at the moment of which I write a hot fever was scorching up the life in my veins, and I was in a state bordering on delirium.

The thought which amidst the feverish confusion of my mind mastered all others was this,—how easy it would be for the men in whose hands I was to get rid of me. Where was the obstacle to their robbing and then destroying me, if it pleased them so to do—who was there to question their assertions that they *had* landed me in safety? I reasoned with curious tormenting ingenuity to prove to myself that I had less chance of reaching my destination than if I had been a bale of goods. For that there would have been a bill of lading; and if it did not come to hand the person to whom it had been consigned would institute a search for it; but who would seek for me?—who expected me?—where was the proof of my having ever been in the boat with these men? We had neither seen nor spoken with any one since leaving San Pier d'Arena. The crew knew that I had a tempting quantity of

gold about me, they had already received half of the sum stipulated for the voyage, and did they not very well know that when, on their return to Genoa, they claimed the other moiety my family would not dare to enter into any minute investigation as to my safety, and that in all probability years would elapse before my fate could be ascertained?

Every trifle added fresh fuel to this nervous excitement. There was a large stone in the stern of the boat, possibly to serve as ballast. As my eye chanced to alight on it, I thought—that stone round my neck—a hole in the water, followed by a gurgling hollow sound, and then silence—a dead mournful silence—horrible, horrible! all looks as it did—there is nothing to bear witness that crime has been busy here. A day comes at last—a week, nay, perhaps, a month hence—and some wave washes on the beach a swollen corpse, not to be recognised even by the tender mother herself. A crowd gathers, looking with horror and disgust, at what?—for that frightful object has almost lost all traces of humanity. I saw the whole scene from beginning to end enacted before me with all the vividness of reality. I did not spare myself one detail; there was a gloomy fascination in it.

I must beg the reader to understand that it is with the greatest difficulty I can put my recollections of that frightful night into any kind of order. The various mental phases through which I passed are sufficiently present to my memory; but the order in which they succeeded one another, the connecting links, are entirely obliterated. However this may be, I remember one circumstance which at another time

might have passed unnoticed, but which then appeared to me full of direful meaning.

At one particular moment of the night I saw Spalatro lean towards his comrade and whisper something, to which the other gave an assenting nod. This was sufficient to turn the current of my thoughts into a fresh channel, and became, so to speak, the starting point for new and more definite terrors.

"These men," thought I, "are then actually plotting against me." Once upon this track I kept on it, full gallop. To be sure they were; had I not felt all along how easy it would be for them to get rid of me—to murder me!

Some time afterwards, Spalatro laid down his oars and drew something out of his pocket, struck fire, and lighted his pipe. I followed his every motion and gesture with the thrilling earnestness of one who believed his life or death hung on a thread. Spalatro's neighbour in his turn spoke in a whisper. "A little later," was the answer; I heard the words distinctly; this put an end to my doubts—it was a clear case.

Let no one imagine that I yielded myself a willing victim to these terrors: on the contrary, the little reason still left me made desperate efforts to take the upper hand, but in vain. More than once I said to myself—"This is all the work of a diseased imagination;" and yet the moment afterwards a word, a movement, or look of Spalatro's was sufficient to reawaken all my fears. In short, two distinct beings seemed to exist in me; one frantic, raving mad, the other in possession of his reason, watching, pitying, and striving to set the former to rights; a sort of chorus, like that of the Greek

tragedies, which, always offering good advice, is never even listened to.

"How thankful should I be," thought I, "if I could fall asleep—ay, and never open my eyes again—if these men really mean to injure me, or else to sleep on till we have fairly reached France."

But to have to think and argue with myself, to seek an issue from an inextricable position; to have to do this, weary to death in mind and body as I was, with the consciousness of inability to cope with my difficulties, oh! words cannot describe the horror of such a situation. Unluckily the outward world but too well harmonized with my gloomy foreboding thoughts. Masses of black clouds were careering wildly through the sky, entirely veiling the hazy moon—rain fell at intervals—it was a dreary scene. The night must have been far advanced; for the captain, who was seated at the poop by my side, was ready to drop with sleep. He had several times endeavoured to persuade me to lie down in the bottom of the boat and try to rest, but all in vain—I dared not! At last, after another refusal, the motive of which he was certainly very far from suspecting, he himself took the advice he had given me: he lay down, and a moment afterwards was snoring gloriously.

The presence of this man, who had won my entire confidence by his firm and loyal conduct through the squall of the preceding day, had, unknown to myself, exercised a salutary influence over me. With him departed the little ray of reason still left to me, and I gave myself up for lost. From that

moment I ceased all struggle with the phantoms that so harassed me, and became the unresisting prey of horrible hallucinations.

At one moment Spalatro's figure expanded to such gigantic dimensions that it reached the clouds; at another his arms and the oars he held united themselves into one frightful whole, and stretched themselves out to seize me; or else his eyes glowed like red-hot charcoal, and I saw him grin and shake his fist at me. Once during the night he spoke to me, and his voice sounded in my ears like a death-knell.

"Had you not better lie down and try to sleep?" he said.

Had he told me in the most distinct manner, "Lie down and be killed!" such words could not have conveyed to my mind a clearer and more complete impression that such was his meaning, than those he had really pronounced. But it is time to put an end to this long death-struggle of reason. There is something both revolting and degrading to human nature in the sight of a darkened intellect wrestling with imaginary dangers; and I say designedly *imaginary* dangers; for I wish it to be well understood, that, excepting a certain grudge that Spalatro bore me, and which he did not seek to disguise, all the rest was merely the work of an over-excited brain.

A faint streak of light on the horizon made the few stars visible look pale, and a white mist began to spread itself over the sea. It was no longer night, and yet it could scarcely be called day. Spalatro, leaning back over his neighbour's shoulder, spoke in a very low voice to the lad seated behind

them. The boy immediately put his hand in his pocket, and then handed something across to Spalatro. This something, I saw it clearly defined against the sky, was an open knife; a poor innocent knife, meant probably to cut a slice of bread. This was my finishing stroke. To rise and leap into the water was the work of an instant. "He is mad! he is mad!" shouted Spalatro. Ten seconds afterwards the boat had reached me, and six strong arms lifted me again on board.

Not a word was uttered. The two men and the boy stood motionless, with their eyes fixed on me. The captain, still holding me by the collar, by which he had helped to pull me out of the sea, bent over me, and gazed intently into my eyes, as if seeking from them an explanation of my strange conduct. After a minute of close scrutiny, he let go his hold of me, and clutching his hair with both hands, cried out in a tone of despair, "He is mad! he is mad!"

"I am not quite mad yet," I replied, endeavouring to appear calm, "but I shall very soon be so, unless you put me on shore."

"Put you on shore!" repeated the captain; "that's a good idea. Do you not know that I might as well throw you back into the sea? On shore! why, it is certain death. Think of your poor mother. What would she say, after all the promises I made to take you safely to France?—Gracious God! what is the matter with you?" seeing that I little heeded his words; "what is the matter?—what are you afraid of here?—what does all this mean?" he asked, in a state of great agitation.

"Do you take us for assassins?" inquired Spalatro, with a bitterness most alarming. How he had guessed what was passing within me, I know not; but that he had done so, I was quite sure.

"For mercy's sake, do not take offence!" said I; "you may easily see that I am not quite myself, and I feel that if I do not quit this boat I shall go mad. Put me on shore—pray, put me on shore!"

The contest lasted some time. I owe it in justice to the captain to say that he did and said everything humanly possible, to deter me from my rash purpose. Expostulations and entreaties were followed by appeals, not only to my reason, but to my softer and better feelings: he left nothing untried. More than once I felt touched; more than once I wavered in my resolution; but each time, by some inexplicable fatality, Spalatro's voice would suddenly join in the conversation, and never failed to reawaken my misgivings. To such an extent did this shrill, yet drawling voice, in the intonations of which thrilled forth deep resentment, give the lie, or seem to do so, to the sense of the words he uttered, which were not only those of encouragement, but often of entreaty. At last I said—

"You have strength on your side: you can master me, and force me to remain, if you choose; but I warn you of the consequences. I shall lose the little reason I have left, and you will have a madman to deal with. Put me on shore, and let me shift for myself." I had no other argument to use, and I used no other, repeating the same words over and

over again. The very effort I was making to appear calm was fanning the volcano within me. I well remember being more than once within an ace of throwing myself again into the sea.

The perplexed captain now got very angry. "You *shall* go with us, whether you like it or not. I will have you bound hand and foot, and we'll land you safely in France, in spite of yourself!"

There must have come some terrific change over my features at these words, for the captain hastened to add, in quite another tone, "No, no, don't be afraid. I don't mean what I say; I won't do it. You shall do anything you please."

"Put me on shore, then."

"Very well; and your blood be on your own head. God is my witness, and these men too, that had you been my own mother's son I could not have meant better by you, or done and said more to prevent your taking this wild step."

"I know it, I know it!" was my reply.

We were, as far as I could judge, about a mile from land. By this time the sun was high in the heavens, and shone brightly upon a little town most picturesquely perched on an eminence of the rock-bound coast. It was agreed that I should be landed a short way below the town, and the boat was accordingly put about in that direction. In the meanwhile, I took off my wet clothes, and put on the suit which I had most fortunately brought away with me. This operation was rather a slow one; so that, when it was finished, we were within a couple of hundred yards of the shore. I raised my

eyes, and lo! my hair stood on end at the sight I beheld. I rose to my feet, and cried, with outstretched hands, "Don't you see? don't you?—they have hanged them!"

In fact, I saw, as clearly as I see these characters I am now tracing on this paper, three gibbets standing on the shore, each supporting a blackened corpse, and at the foot of each, a woman kneeling in deep mourning garments. The men in the boat, ashy pale, watched all my movements in mute terror; their eyes wandering from me to the shore, where, in all probability, they perceived only some rocks, which my delirious imagination had distorted into the awful shapes I have described. As we neared the shore, the vision became less distinct, and when we touched land, I saw in its place only a dark, confused mass. This may easily be accounted for. The objects which I had dressed with such terribly significant shapes were a little to our right, and at a certain distance we got a front view of them; but, as the boat approached, I could only see them sideways; thence the gradual change in their appearance.

I was just leaving the boat, when I heard Spalatro say, "Who is to pay us?" This reminded me of a bit of paper, which, when I reached my destination, I was to give the captain, and upon the presenting of which he would receive the second half of the sum of money agreed on for my voyage. I looked for it, and in so doing found my passport. Lest, if I were taken, I should bring the friend who had procured it for me, in his own name, into trouble, I tore it into small pieces, and threw them into the sea. This done, I handed

the paper I had first sought for to the captain, and said, "Here is the cheque for your money. Thank you. Good bye, and forgive me!" With these hurried words, I leapt on shore.

Strange phenomena of that duality to which I have already alluded! one moment previous, I was the sport of the most frantic delusion, and the next I was giving proofs of a prudence and foresight that would have done honour to the most cool-headed individual. Again, to such a degree did I distrust these men, that, in preference to remaining with them, I wittingly exposed myself to the greatest danger; and yet, in the act of parting with them, I had the consciousness that I did them wrong, and entreated their forgiveness.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE FUGITIVE—CONTINUED.

It was with a feeling almost of joy that I leapt from the boat upon the sandy beach. The perpendicular line of cliffs on which runs the famous Cornice road, towered above me, and higher still rose mountain upon mountain. I ran like a wounded hart up the steep path cut on the face of the cliff. About half way up there was a hut, the door of which a man opened just as I was passing. I was burning with thirst, and stopped to ask him if he would give me some wine or a drink of milk.

He stared at me for a moment, then hastily retreated, and shut the door in my face. I believe I was a frightful, haggard-looking creature. I made no further effort to get the refreshment I so much needed, but continued my hurried course; and when I reached the high road, turned mechanically to the right, in the direction of the town, which I saw not far off.

I had not gone a hundred paces when I perceived a group of persons coming towards me, and an instinctive feeling prompted me to shun them. Looking about for the means of doing so, I saw on my left a path which led up the

mountain. I instantly took it, and with a feverish eagerness that rendered me insensible to its ruggedness—up, up I crept, till I had left far behind me all the villas which lie scattered over the sides of the olive-covered mountains of Liguria.

Nor did I stop till I had reached the height where cultivation ended. The sun was scorching; I was dreadfully thirsty, and quite out of breath; so I sat down, and began to consider what would be my most prudent course. I felt the necessity of forming some plan, and, at the same time, my utter inability to do so. I was like a man in a dream, on whom the most instant danger presses, and who is yet incapable of making the slightest motion to avert it. The instinct of self-preservation called loudly and imperiously on me to gather up the reins of reason, to bridle my thoughts; but do what I would—and what a labour, what a struggle it was—I could not manage it. Words cannot give an idea of the gloomy despair which the knowledge of my helplessness brought with it. Had a carabineer appeared at that moment, and seized me by the collar, I could have thanked him for putting an end to my mental agony.

I was startled from this mood by the barking of dogs below me. There was in a corner of my brain an indistinct notion of having read or heard that it was the practice in the south of France to hunt men with dogs. And though I knew very well that I was not in France, it immediately struck my fancy that I had been seen and recognised, and that the dogs were out to track me. Springing to my feet, I rushed on as chance directed, like a hunted wild beast,

till I came to the brink of a deep quarry, that stopped my onward course. "Would it not be as well to throw myself over, head foremost, and so make an end of earthly troubles?" The sight of the deep gulf had a fascination for me,—there would be rest at the bottom! "And thy mother!" I looked round to see who had spoken; there was no one of course. The filial recollection, however, had come in time to save me, and I now recoiled with horror from the edge of the precipice.

The barking had ceased. Let me try to sleep; it will do me good. I doubled up my coat to serve as a pillow, and laid myself down. For some time I remained quite still, with my eyes closed, without moving hand or foot, but it would not do. Sleep would not answer my call. The restless activity of my mind overpowered even the weariness of my body, and there was a sound of rushing waters in my ears, which banished sleep. My thirst also had by this time become unbearable, and I ventured down from the height to which I had climbed, to the lower and more cultivated belt of the mountain, in search of water.

Luckily it was not long before I lighted on a spring. I drank eagerly, and washed my hands and face with delight, and then once more lay down under a tree close by, to rest, if not to sleep. Before me sparkled the immense expanse of the Mediterranean, of a blue deeper and brighter than the sky that shone above it. There I lay,—how long I know not, but certainly for hours. I did not sleep, that I remember, but I fell into a state between sleeping and

waking, during which I had a dream, or rather another vision.

To this day I am ignorant if there really were an island in the sea before me. I either saw, or dreamed I saw, that there was one, and as clearly did I see the Emperor Napoleon lying there dead, but dressed as he is always represented, and with a cocked hat and boots. I knew not why I should dream or have visions of Napoleon, with whom I had never held the slightest communication, and whom I had never even seen. There he lay, however, distinctly before me. All his relatives and marshals, as we see them in engravings, were there, walking in procession, each as he passed bowing reverently to the august dead, and then all crowding round him with acts of adoration.

What roused me from this dream I cannot tell. This I know, I went again to the spring, and once more washed my face and hands; and then I began to wander about without any plan. In course of time I got to a little promontory, whence I discovered the town below, not far off. The sight made me think of some friends I had there, on whose help and kindness I knew I might depend. Suppose I ventured down and tried to find them out. I instantly resolved to make the experiment.

The mountain was crossed in almost every direction by paths regularly cut, and by one of these I hoped to reach the town without being obliged to go on the high road. As I walked along my attention was caught by a small house or rather cottage, whose white walls, green jalousies, and the

snowy curtains peeping forth, gave it an air of comfort quite captivating to a weary wanderer, who knew not where to look for food or shelter; and it was with reluctant steps, and with more than one sigh, that I left it behind.

The path I was in followed a gradual slope, and at last I perceived, to my great mortification, that it led into the highway, which, to reach the town, I must walk along for some considerable distance; a necessity I greatly regretted — but I knew not how to avoid it. As I emerged therefore into the road, I put on the most unconcerned air I could assume, and walked forward leisurely; but I very soon began to entertain serious misgivings as to the possibility of carrying through my project safely.

In fact, I observed that the few persons I met eyed me with surprise and attention; from which I concluded that there was something in my appearance calculated to excite suspicion.

The feeling of discomfort arising from this discovery increased immeasurably when I was within view of the town gates, and perceived two Carabineers standing there like sentinels. The sight of their odious uniform cut short all hesitation, and back I turned instantly. In a little town, where everybody knows everybody, my being a stranger would have been found out immediately, and, joined to the evident fact of my rather suspicious appearance, might have led not only to the asking of very ticklish questions, but to the discovery of who I actually was.

So by the same path by which I had come down the

mountain, I returned,—like the king of France and his renowned army,—and began my wanderings without end or aim, till I found myself once more in the neighbourhood of the dear little cottage with the green shutters, which had so taken my fancy. With what eager eyes did I look at it! What a craving desire I felt to lay my head under the shelter of its roof! There was a magnificent fig-tree close by, and as the day was now on the wane, I made up my mind to lie down under its shade, and spend the night there as best I could.

"If I can only get some sleep," thought I, "my head will be clearer to-morrow, and then I shall be able to think of some practicable means of getting out of this scrape." Thereupon I stretched myself on the ground, and settled myself in an attitude of repose, though the cravings of hunger which I now felt gave me little prospect of a tolerable night.

"What are you doing here?" said a gruff voice on a sudden, close to my ear. Opening my eyes I saw a countryman standing by me, and looking hard at me. I did not rise to my feet, but sat up very quietly, so as not to scare him, or make him afraid of me; and taking my purse out of my pocket, so that he should not take me for a common vagrant, I held it up before him and said, "I have lost my way, good man; I am very tired, and I do not wish to go all the way to the town; if you will give me something to eat and drink, and a place to lie down in till the morning, you shall have some of this money."

The man looked half stupid half unwilling; nevertheless,

tempted by the sight of the gold, he bade me follow him, and led the way to the captivating cottage that stood close by. How lucky and how odd, thought I, that I should find a resting-place in the very house which I have all day been looking upon with such longing, and within whose walls I have so yearned to be.

However, I had been reckoning without my host in every sense of the word; for, when we got to the door, he bade me stop and sit down on the stone bench at the side of it, while he went to fetch me something to eat. He very soon returned with some bread and a basket of cherries. I was rather disappointed, and asked if he had nothing more substantial to give me. He shook his head, without taking the trouble to speak; so, as I was faint for want of food, I was fain to be thankful even for this small supply.

While I was still eating, a woman came up to us, younger and better-looking than the man. She was fresh coloured and smiling, and if not handsome had a good-natured intelligent look, that made up for the absence of actual beauty; whereas the man, who, as I quickly discovered, was her husband, was one of those unhappily constituted beings who seem as if they could neither be good nor bad. The woman at first looked surprised; but when she heard how it was that I happened to be there, the surprise turned to anger at the way her husband had treated me. Women are gifted with finer and nicer perceptions than men; dusty and travel-worn as I was, this peasant woman at once guessed my social position; for she said, with no little asperity, to her stolid

helpmate, "Is this the way you treat a gentleman?" then turning to me she begged me to go in and rest in the house. The room into which she ushered me was on the ground floor, small and scantily furnished, but neatly kept. The kind hostess gave me the largest and most comfortable chair, and began at once to busy herself in the preparation of a repast somewhat more in accordance with my wants.

She brought me, with a good-will that had something invigorating in itself, some cold meat, and very tolerable wine, though the man had told me there was none; and then, after asking me if I would like to remain during the night, she began to arrange a bed, for which no one could doubt I had great need.

Refreshed and strengthened by the wine and food I had taken, comforted by feeling myself once more under shelter of a roof, and cheered by the hearty kindness of my good hostess, the excitement of my mind began to subside, and I felt able to consider with comparative coolness what I ought to do.

Was it not possible through this kind-hearted active woman to open some communication with either of the two sure friends I had in Ventimiglia? If I should succeed in this, it might prove my salvation. Pursuant to this plan, with great caution I made some inquiries about different persons in the town, whom I knew only by name, mentioning in a casual manner, that I had some friends there. From one thing to another I at last got courage enough to put the direct question,—

"Do you know Mr. Botta?" He was one of the two on whose aid I knew I could reckon.

"Oh! to be sure," replied the man, "but it is long since Mr. Botta left this, he has been settled at Nice for some time." This answer deprived me of the half of my little capital of hope. It was then with a throbbing heart and faltering voice that I risked the other half.

"And can you tell me any thing of Doctor Palli?"

"Per bacco!" replied the woman with a merry laugh, "know Doctor Palli! why you are in his house at this moment."

I fairly started up from my chair. Here was indeed a piece of unexpected luck: almost within my reach, the very man I wanted, the man to communicate with whom I would have willingly given all I was worth in the world at that time! However, I controlled my joy as well as I could, and turning to the man, said, "Ah! indeed, that is lucky, for Doctor Palli is one of my most intimate friends, and I am extremely anxious to see him with as little delay as possible. Can you carry a note to him this evening?" The man having willingly agreed to do so, I tore a leaf out of my pocket-book, and wrote a few guarded words, which I delivered to my messenger, and, with a feeling of relief from a heavy burden, saw him hasten on his errand.

Meanwhile the good woman continued her preparations. There was evidently but one bed in the little household, and this she did not hesitate for a moment to prepare for me, only removing one of the mattresses for her own use.

"She was sorry," she said, "that the small ground-floor which she and her husband occupied, could not afford me better accommodation. The two upper stories would certainly answer much better, but they were never used without express orders from her landlord, for the use of whose family they were kept."

I thanked my kind hostess warmly for her attention, protesting that I needed and wished for nothing better than what she offered with such cordiality.

I was most eager to lay my head once more on a pillow; and awaited the return of the man with great impatience. At length he came back, and assured me that he had placed my note in Doctor Palli's own hands. I was in the very act of going to bed when a well-known voice sounded in my ear, and turning, I found myself in the arms of my friend.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE FUGITIVE—CONTINUED.

THE sight of a familiar face, the sound of a familiar voice, are cordials which a man situated as I then was can thoroughly appreciate. The first thing the Doctor said was rather disappointing, however, to one whose most earnest desire was to be in bed. The house I was in, according to the Doctor, was not a safe place for me; the fact of a stranger having landed from a boat in the morning, and having afterwards been seen on the mountain, was already talked of in the town, and it was not possible that what everybody knew the police alone should be ignorant of. Now should any search be made, it would of course be in the neighbourhood of where the stranger had been seen.

"Don't be alarmed," said the Doctor kindly, mistaking for uneasiness the vexation that appeared on my countenance; "we will get you out of this scrape; but you must have patience, and submit to the guidance of others."

I offered no remark; what could I say? and made myself ready to go.

My poor landlady, who found that all her benevolent bustle and hospitable preparations were to be thrown away,

looked ready to cry. I did not offer *her* any money. I was convinced that all she had done had been from real benevolence and good feeling; and actions taking their rise from such motives are beyond payment.

As I shook her rough hand most cordially I hope I made her feel that I was really grateful; I then held out my hand to her husband, leaving within his palm a small sum to which I knew he would have no objection, at the same time that it was an acknowledgment of his services.

Outside the door we found several persons waiting, who fell into the rear as we turned our backs on what I had looked upon as a haven of rest and security. The night was dark, the sky was overcast, and I was so sleepy that I could distinguish but little of the road we were traversing: all I can recollect is, that we skirted the hill in the direction of the town, which, however, we avoided entering; and that after walking some time we came to a round tower, which I found was for the present to be my hiding-place. The Doctor introduced me to a man he called Pietro, who had the appearance of a labourer, and who was to have charge of me. I then received several instructions; among others, I was charged only to open my door to one peculiar knock, which the Doctor repeated over and over again; and when he had satisfied himself that I could make no mistake, we entered the tower.

The room I was to occupy, and which took up all the ground-floor of my new abode, contained no other furniture than a bed, a table, and a few chairs. Here Doctor Palli,

whom I had briefly informed as we went along, of the circumstances connected with my landing in this neighbourhood, not without expressing strong doubts as to there being any foundation for my fears, felt my pulse, bade me go to bed, and then bled me freely. Thereupon he wished me good night: I fell asleep at once, and did not awake till the sun was high above the horizon. I was myself again: calm, almost cheerful, though rather weak.

The events of the last two days were like a dream; yet what I could distinguish through the mist in which they were enveloped, was sufficient to fill me with shame and remorse—shame at the deplorable part I had involuntarily enacted; remorse at the unworthy manner in which I had treated the captain and his crew. But what could I do now? Nothing; except seize the first opportunity to clear them of any imputation, and to manage that they should one day hear of my regret; and this was done, so soon as in my power.

After breakfast, to while away the tedium of the long hours—for I had neither book nor pen nor ink—I began to examine my new abode. The room in which I had passed the night was as dull as a convent cell; it had no other light, so far as I can remember, but that which it received from the window of a small winding staircase, that led to an upper room, exactly similar to the one below in point of size and furniture, except that there was no bed in it, but with the incalculable advantage—to a poor prisoner—of a window, commanding a fine view of the surrounding country.

Here I spent hour after hour; the only interruption to my solitary reflections being breakfast and dinner. I did not see the person who brought my provisions; they were always given to Pietro, the man I had seen on the night of my arrival.

In the evening, the Doctor came to see me, but with the greatest precaution. Like sleuth-hounds, the police scented their victim in the air: it was most material to my safety that they should not be roused to the chase.

Two days passed in this alternation of speculation and alarm. Situated as I was, there could be nothing more trying than inaction. In a struggle there is vitality and hope; but it is killing to sit day after day watching the rising and the setting of the sun; to feel the blood stagnating in your veins, without being able to move hand or foot to help yourself, bound down by the iron chain of circumstance. An incident, however, which I must not omit, soon happened, and broke the monotony of the life I was leading in a manner as abrupt as it was disagreeable.

On the forenoon of the third day, I had gone as usual to the upper room, and taken my accustomed place opposite but at a certain distance from the window, so that I could enjoy looking out on the fine scenery without myself being seen from out of doors. The hours went slowly by; the time for dinner came, but none appeared. I waited one hour, then another, when I did not doubt that the Doctor had found some cause of alarm which had prevented his sending my provisions as usual. I knew afterwards that I

was mistaken in this supposition. Some accident—I forget what, had happened to the bearer. I therefore returned to my bed-room, and threw myself on the bed, in the hope of sleeping off my hunger. In fact, I did fall into a light slumber, out of which I was startled by a noise like the roar of a cannon, and in an instant the room was full of dust, so that I was almost smothered. I was wondering what it could be, when Pietro, who had also heard the noise, came in to see what was the matter; and on our going to the upper room, we found that the ceiling had partially fallen, exactly over the spot in which I always sat at dinner. A narrow escape it was. Had my dinner come at the usual hour, I must either have been killed or maimed for life. . .

The following morning I was awakened by Pietro rapping violently. I leapt out of bed, and unbolted the door. He came in, in great alarm. "The carabineers! the carabineers!" began he, in a loud, quaking whisper; and "the carabineers" were the only words I could make out of what he said. Without seeking any further explanation, I dressed myself hurriedly, and made for the door, where Pietro pointed out a vine-covered wall, and a hedge, on the other side of which, he muttered rather than said, I should find a person waiting, in whose hands I must place myself. There was, of course, neither time nor room for discussion or hesitation. I ran to the hedge, scrambled over it, and, sure enough, found a man waiting for me.

This man, whom we shall call Ercole, was a person that would have been remarkable in any country. He was an

extremely well-proportioned man, though much above the ordinary height; and the expression of his face, denoting almost brutal energy of will, corresponded well with the vigour and activity of his body. He somewhat allayed the alarm which my guardian Pietro had excited.

Doctor Palli, he told me, had been summoned to the presence of the commandant of the town. Greatly alarmed at this summons, he had, previous to obeying it, sent for Ercole, and entrusted to him the care of removing me from what could no longer be considered a place of safety, to one more secure. Here Ercole stopped, and drew my attention to a couple of carabineers who were going up a hill opposite to where we stood. "The police are evidently on the look out," he said, "for they are quite off the usual beat."

Then turning to me, he continued, "Do not be alarmed, Sir. I will bring you through safe enough; only you must trust me, and do whatever I say, however odd it may seem."

In the plight in which I was, I must perforce trust him, or indeed the first comer who promised me fairly. He moved on, and I followed. It appeared to me, ignorant as I was of the outskirts of Ventimiglia, that we kept wandering backwards and forwards, up and down the hill, close to the town. At length, after what seemed to me hours, we suddenly came to a sheltered little valley, apparently out of all risk of intruding carabineers. Here, Ercole told me, I must submit to lie concealed till dusk, for there really would be imminent danger should I be seen near any high road, dressed

as I was. It may be remembered, that before quitting the boat I had thrown off the sailor's disguise, and resumed my customary dress.

Submission was the order of the day; I therefore lay down on the ground, as my guide directed, and suffered myself to be carefully covered with grass, brushwood, and dead leaves; in short, with anything that came to hand. This done, Ercole desired me, happen what might, not to stir, and left me in a very novel, and not very agreeable or heroic situation; nor was it one very easy to be long maintained.

At first I managed pretty well; but judge of my horror when two men came to hoe a piece of ground close by. I dared not make the slightest motion, and scarcely ventured to draw my breath, for fear of attracting attention. The sound of their hoes seemed to come nearer to me. Every minute I dreaded some unlucky stroke which should betray me to their wondering eyes. My body was literally on the rack, and I may say I was scarcely more at ease in mind. The summons received by Doctor Palli, and its possible consequences, constantly and exclusively occupied my thoughts. The precariousness of my own situation, and anxiety for my personal safety, dwindled into nothing before the idea of the trouble and danger I had possibly brought on my friend.

This sort of *carcere duro* lasted from mid-day till sunset. At length, I had the happiness of hearing the retreating steps of the two men, who had been working, as it were, all round me; but it was some time before I could muster courage

to peep out of my hiding-place. It was nearly dusk, and presently Ercole's large form reappeared.

"What of the Doctor?" said I, eagerly; "is he safe?"

"The Doctor is safe at home," was the reply.

What a relief it was to hear such blessed words; and what a relief also to stretch my cramped limbs. Ercole added, that the interview between the Doctor and the commandant had gone off pretty well. The circumstance of a mysterious stranger, who had landed some days ago, having been seen wandering in the vicinity of Doctor Palli's cottage, had led the police, who could hear nothing of the new arrival in the town, to suspect that he might have found a refuge there. There seemed to be no shadow of doubt in the minds of the authorities, that the stranger, whoever he might be, was a suspicious character, and ought to be looked after. The matter had been referred to the commandant, before the police took the rather adventurous step of ordering a search to be made in the house of so respectable and influential a person as Doctor Palli, who had never hitherto incurred even a shadow of suspicion.

As a preliminary measure, the commandant had sent for Dr. Palli, and warned him that it was his duty to make it known if there were any stranger at present within his premises. The Doctor, of course, stoutly denied the fact of any one having found shelter or concealment in his cottage; upon which he was allowed to retire. On the morrow, however, the suspected house was searched from top to bottom, from cellar to attic.

Ercole had brought with him a basket containing cold meat, bread, and a bottle of wine; and it was well, for I was almost starving. The hasty meal over, he said that now I could accompany him to where he was going without much risk. A long walk round the outside of the town brought us to what I knew afterwards to be the abode of my new protector. This was a small house close to the sea; the back-door, indeed, opened on the beach. He led me to a room on the first story which he told me was for the present appropriated to me. I received pretty nearly the same instructions from him as I had done from the Doctor on the night I went to the round tower. I was to open the door only at a particular signal. In case of any pressing danger occurring when he might be absent, he taught me the management of a very simple, but clever enough mechanical contrivance, by which I could effect my escape from the window, without the risk of breaking my neck. This contrivance was a large shutter, which by means of strong and specially adapted hinges, fell downwards from the side of the window, forming a slanting platform by which a person could slide without difficulty to the ground. Ercole added, "In case of a surprise do not attempt to escape by flight—it would be useless—but make for the trees you see yonder," pointing to some not far off; "climb up any one of them, and remain there quietly: whenever I find you missing I shall seek you there, and provide for your safety."

The prospect of having to slide from a window, and then to climb up a tree was not very re-assuring, certainly; but the precautions against danger, and the earnest tone in which

the instructions were spoken, gave me a strong impression of the man's sincerity and good-will. In the days of which I am writing, it must be remembered how a despotic government, wielded by the hands of prejudiced men, trembling for their privileges, had demoralized all classes, and that I had some cause to thank God, as I did, that I had to do with a person of whose good faith and deliberate purpose to save me I could not doubt.

I must now say a few words of the captain. So soon as I had left the boat he set out on his return to Genoa, where he at once went to my family, not a little mortified and distressed at the story he had to relate. His report was, that I had gone mad, and probably by the time he was speaking had either fallen a victim to my own frenzy, or been laid hold of by the police. The consternation of the whole family, the anguish and despair of my mother, may easily be conceived.

My youngest brother, however, having procured another passport instead of the one the captain told him I had torn to pieces, immediately set out for the town near which I had landed, to try and find out what had become of me, and to see if there was still a possibility of doing me any good. On his way he paid a visit to my uncle the Canon, whose residence was only a few hours distant from Ventimiglia, intending to make the old man accompany him thither. What was my brother's surprise and gratification when he found that our uncle had already been made fully acquainted, by my friend Dr. Palli, with all the circumstances that had taken place since I left the captain. What a relief to hear

that I was free—that I was sane, and in comparative safety! My brother's journey to Ventimiglia seeming now to be useless, he readily acquiesced in Dr. Palli's recommendation that as little stir as possible should be made about me, and that any meeting between us had better be avoided; he therefore contented himself with remaining at my uncle's, to be on the spot if required. A sure messenger was despatched to Dr. Palli with the fresh passport, which eventually reached me through Ercole.

For the second time, with the help of the Doctor, means were arranged for my escape to France. Ercole hired a boat, and two men in whom he said we might have perfect confidence; but the police keeping a stricter watch than ever on all arrivals and departures, it was decided that I should go on foot to Mentone, and get on board the boat there. Mentone is one of the three towns of the principality of Monaco, a Lilliputian independent state, set, as it is, like a jewel in the Sardinian dominions.

On the evening of the day previous to the one fixed for my second departure from my native country, Dr. Palli came to wish me good-bye. I had thus an opportunity of thanking him to my heart's content, and of giving him the sum he had agreed to pay the men hired for this occasion, when they should return with a certificate of my being in safety. It was well we met that evening, and that I had an opportunity of expressing my gratitude to one who had been as a second providence to me, for I never saw him again. Peace be to his memory!

Everything was ready, the men and boat were waiting at Mentone, and by the high road it would take me only an hour or so to join them; but we had forgotten to take wind and weather into calculation; and as ill-luck would have it, a gale arose, and blew furiously without intermission, for three entire days. On the fourth morning it abated, and Ercole told me he thought we might depart.

To avoid any danger which a chance rencontre might occasion if I accompanied him dressed as a gentleman, he brought me a very old straw hat, a fustian jacket, and a pair of trousers originally white, but now of a nondescript colour, and pieced and patched in every direction. I was to pass for his nephew, going with him to Nice to buy young olive plants, which would be a plausible reason for our being on the mountain; for, in his great prudence, Ercole had planned that we should quit the highway as soon as possible, for a cross-cut, longer than the public road, but more eligible for me. We set out about mid-day, and after a fatiguing walk of nine hours we reached Mentone. Although it was evening we had still some daylight. Ercole bade me wait in a copse of young olive trees near the beach, and once more hiding me under some brushwood, he went by himself to reconnoitre, and to see if all was in readiness.

I had not long to wait this time, for he returned almost instantly to say that all was safe, and the men and the boat waiting a few yards off. We ran down to the beach, and in a few minutes I was on board. I had not done with accidents and omens, however; for in my haste my foot slipped,

and stumbling forward I was so unlucky as to break a demi-john of wine, which the men had placed in the boat for their own use. A second time, in the very moment of embarkation, these words were addressed to me, "A bad omen, Sir!" "On the contrary," said the other man, "they say in these parts that to spill wine is a sign of good luck."

I was very much annoyed at this accident, because the loss of the wine could not at the moment be repaired, and I knew the men would feel the want of it during the several hours they had to row. There was no help for it, however, as time pressed, and Ercole insisted on the necessity of no further delay. I took leave of this man, who though a perfect stranger to me and mine, had shown me the unwearied attention and devotion of a friend. My heart swelled as I pressed his hard hand within my own, leaving in it a token, not of my feelings, nor yet as meant to repay him for services which money alone can neither purchase nor remunerate, but to indemnify him, as he was a man who had to work for daily bread, for his loss of time on my account.

In this slight sketch of one of the most trying episodes of my life, I cannot afford to do more than touch lightly on the characters of the several persons with whom I came in contact. There is certainly much of cold-heartedness, of want of good faith, of selfishness in the world. Thank God, there is, however, no lack of warm and generous hearts to cheer our many hours of sorrow, and to help us in our difficulties. Such at least has been my experience, and I tell it with a grateful heart.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE FUGITIVE—CONTINUED.

THE night was beautiful; one of those nights in which everything is in repose, when the splendours of the sky are veiled by soft fleecy clouds, when from the delicate crescent of the new-born moon there descends on the wide ocean a thin line of glittering light, looking like a path to a brighter world.

"Fine weather!" said I; addressing the man who was nearest to me.

"Sorry to say it won't last," answered he; "do you see that long white line yonder like the back-bone of a fish? We shall have more wind than we shall like very soon."

The regular sound of the oars as they dipped in the water tuned my thoughts as it were, and they took a gentler and less depressing bent than might have been expected at this moment, when I was consummating my farewell to my native land.

We had been gliding on in silence for two hours or more, when the prophecy of the boatman seemed about to be verified. Dark threatening clouds had gathered by this time, and there were occasional fierce gusts of wind. The sea, too,

began to froth and foam. Another hour had passed before the man opposite to me broke the long silence.

"We have arrived at last," said he.

"Have we?" exclaimed I in some surprise.

"Thank God, we have!" resumed he, pointing out to me, a short distance a-head of us, a river flowing into the sea.

"Don't you see it, Sir? that is the Var, and you are now in safety."

I strained my eyes to penetrate the darkness. I did see the river distinctly. We passed the mouth of it, the strong current rendered it difficult to land there; but a few strokes more and they ran the boat upon the shore.

My voyage, then, was really over; I was safe: and now I had only to settle with the boatmen, and go as fast as I could to Antibes. No further concealment was necessary, I might once more walk erect, choose my own path, and resume my own name. As I was thinking all this, I gave the men a paper signed by me, declaring that they had fulfilled their engagement, and on the presentation of which they would be paid the sum stipulated for their services. I had already one foot on land, and one still in the boat, when I suddenly said with a feeling of new-born doubt—

"You are quite sure that this is French ground!"

"Would to God," replied the man who had not yet spoken, pointing to the sky now ominously overcast, and then to the swelling sea, "Would to God, that we were as safe at home as it is true that you are on French ground."

"Which way must I go?" I asked, now quite reassured.

"After leaving the beach," said the same man, "turn to your left hand, and go straight on till you come to a clump of olive trees; the high road to Antibes is close by."

I took a piece of gold out of my purse, and gave it to him, saying, "God bless you, and grant you a safe voyage. When you reach home drink to my health and safety." I turned away with my heart quite full; they were my countrymen: henceforth I should be among strangers.

What the hour was I cannot say with certainty. Perhaps twelve o'clock, or a little later. All around was dark and dismal, and the rays of the fast sinking moon were so faint that they only rendered darkness visible. I walked on for some time, anxiously looking for the tuft of olive trees; and thinking I had at last descried them, I hastily made my way thither. It was not without some astonishment I remarked that the ground was so wet that I sank over my shoes at every step. When I reached the trees, I found that they were tamarisks and not olives. In another moment the sea was before me, close to me. I stopped quite dumfoundered. "How was this?" I must have kept too much to the left. Retreating from the sea in an oblique direction, I pushed on to the right, and in a few seconds came to the river. How very strange that I should come to the river, which I had certainly just left behind me!

There was but one explanation possible, and in spite of the evidence of my senses, I satisfied myself with it. In all this turning and re-turning, thought I, I must have entirely deviated from the course pointed out to me, and have come

back unawares to the very spot from which I started. If now I turn my back to the river, and walk on in a diagonal line, I must naturally be going towards France. I did so, but lo! in a few minutes, there was the river again in front of me. "Good God! am I the sport of a delusion? There are then two rivers here!" And in a state of mind bordering on distraction, I ran to the right and then to the left, and up and down, pacing twenty times over every inch of ground in every direction. Water, water—everywhere water! Doubt was no longer possible. "The false ruffians! how they have betrayed me!"

A few hundred paces from the sea the Var divides itself, and forms a small island, as far as I can remember, in the shape of an acute triangle, of which the sea is the basis, and the two branches of the river the two sides. On this piece of land I was, encompassed by water alone, and helpless enough, God knows. A ray of hope shot suddenly across my mind,—there *must* be a bridge or ferry; the boatmen had possibly forgotten to tell me of it, and in my hurry and confusion I had overlooked it. But a most minute search from the sea up to the very junction of the two branches of the river soon convinced me that there was at least no bridge. Far off, however, close to the opposite shore, I saw something black moving on the water. My heart gave a bound, "Hallo! boat here!" No answer broke the silence. I then strained my eyes to make out what it really was that I saw moving, and ended by discovering that what I had taken for a boat was nothing more than the reflection in the river of a tree

on the opposite bank, the branches of which the wind was waving to and fro. There was neither bridge nor ferry, and before me a foaming river. The naked reality stared me in the face!

Ah! how heartlessly had these men deceived me! Could it have been through ignorance of the locality? It was impossible to believe this of men whose trade, as smugglers, brought them constantly to this part of the coast, and to whom, consequently, every inch of it must be familiar. No, they had acted thus with the full consciousness of what they were doing; these heartless men, in order to hasten by half an hour their return to their homes, had not hesitated to place the life of one of their fellow-creatures in fearful jeopardy.

This was a terrible moment. "Those who do injury to others," says Manzoni somewhere, "are not only accountable for the actual evil they inflict, but also for the perversion of feeling which they give rise to in their victims." I experienced the truth of the remark on this occasion, as I felt all the worst passions of human nature kindling within my breast: floods of bitter hatred gushed into my heart; wild curses and imprecations rose to my lips; I turned round and round in my strange prison, like a wild beast in its cage, and addressed the traitors as if they had been present. How well they had earned the blessing I had bestowed upon them! and I laughed aloud, and my laugh sounded strange and fearful in my own ears. The thoughts I thought, the words I spoke, are better left untold. Suffice it to say, that I hated

and despised myself as belonging to the same race with such vile wretches.

To wait patiently till morning in this state of restlessness, between life and death, became quite impossible. Come what would of it, I must get out of this suspense; I must try to cross the river. Should I perish in the attempt—well, I should at least have done with suffering. Without further consideration, I plunged at once into the boiling torrent. The current was excessively strong, and in spite of all my efforts, when at a very short distance from the bank, I felt I was about to lose my footing. The love of life, which clings to men even under the most desperate suffering, spoke aloud in that moment, and suggested that I was setting my life on a desperate cast, and that this was not the moment, when all around lay shrouded in darkness, to attempt to pass such a river. I therefore, not without difficulty, made my way back to the bank, and there sat down to await the dawn of day. My bath, however,—the water being extremely cold, —acted beneficially on mind and body, and restored my self-possession.

My thoughts in that dismal hour were solemn, such as became a man on the brink of the grave. I thought earnestly of all those I had loved so dearly; I evoked their forms, I addressed to them all a silent and tender farewell: I strove to bring myself into the frame of mind appropriate to my situation, that is to say, I strove, as a dying man can do, to feel at peace with all the world—to be at peace with God! I tried to forgive even those who had, so entirely

without any justifiable motive, condemned me to this agony, and I honestly believe that I did pardon them.

Such was the mood in which I passed the remainder of the night; the wind blew high, and there were showers of rain, which, wet as I was already high above the knees, chilled me to death. From time to time a great sea-gull would sail so closely over my head as to fan my hair with its heavy wings, while it uttered a savage cry, as if in wonder and anger at the creature who had thus invaded its peculiar domain.

Luckily I had some cigars with me, which, being in a breast pocket, had escaped the water; and I smoked almost incessantly. No one but a hardened habitual smoker can understand the comfort which this occupation gave me. With the cigar I felt less alone in that lugubrious place; it warmed me, and was—I may as well say it—like a friend. By degrees, the deep dark loneliness began to give way before the misty grey which precedes the earliest dawn; the grey mist in its turn faded away, and a long line of yellowish white marked out the horizon to the eastward: a chilly breeze fluttered the leaves of the trees; the twittering of the birds, and the busy hum of insects—so grateful to the ear in that solitude, gave token that all nature was awaking to hail the coming of the new-born day.

Who has not experienced how the gloom that has weighed heavily on us, and coloured all our meditations during the night, gradually disappears before the light of day, and how, with the splendours of the rising sun, the early song

of birds, the bracing morning breeze, there is born within us a new spirit of hope and love, and of energy to contend and conquer?

Thus it was with me, and with renewed courage I prepared a second time to try the passage of the river. It would be a desperate attempt; but, all things considered, my only chance of salvation. There was, indeed, a remote chance of a boat passing near enough to see my signals; or I might make myself seen or heard by some one on the other side of the river. But I was absolutely deterred from either of these attempts, by the reflection that one or other might prove a two-edged sword in my hand, as I had an equal chance of being seen and heard by those on the Sardinian, as by those on the French side. Indeed, the one might be more eager to capture, than the other to liberate me. Besides, was I even sure that the ground on which I stood was not Sardinian? This consideration was effectual in deciding me to remain no longer where I was. So, in spite of the danger involved in the endeavour to cross that impetuous river, inexperienced as I was, I made up my mind to try it, as the only chance of escape that was left to me. Having thus decided, I did my best, by a careful survey of the river from where it entered the sea up to the junction of the two branches, to make myself master of its peculiarities, of its most dangerous points, and of the aid to be derived from adventitious circumstances.

The bed of the Var was very wide, but nearly the half of it a dry course. What might strictly be called the river, lay

in it like a long sinuous serpent, or rather serpents, and the water thus collected or drawn together had all the force and danger of torrents. They rushed with frightful velocity past the bank where I was standing, and I judged, by what I could see of the opposite side, that it was the same there. I chose my spot as near as possible to where the river separated into two, this being the point most remote from the sea, being swept into which was my greatest danger.

To think of crossing in a direct line against such a terrific current, was entirely out of the question. My plan, therefore, was to take an oblique line, which, I expected, would enable me to gain one or other of the strips of dry land separating the streams. My idea was, that I should thus be able to recruit my strength, and recover breath to accomplish the rest of the passage. I was prepared to expect a struggle, and no trifling one. I therefore took some preliminary measures. I placed my purse and passport in my hat, which I then secured on my head as firmly as I could with my cravat, tied under my chin: and lest my trowsers, which were rather wide, should impede me, I turned them up above the knees, tying a handkerchief round each leg.

Alive now to the danger of my precipitation the evening before, I stepped, with the greatest precaution, into the bounding river. I thought I had appreciated its strength and rapidity; but when I actually experienced its power, my heart quailed within me. The water had scarcely reached to my

knee, when I felt that I was losing my footing. I made almost superhuman efforts to maintain it, but in vain; the river swelled and deepened around me. I then gathered together all my strength, and plunged resolutely forward, trying to swim. But I did not gain an inch of way in the direction I wished to take. Another instant, and I was whirling and tossing along as if I had been a straw on the surface of the water. I still preserved my presence of mind; and seeing that I was approaching a small patch of land, or rather a pyramidal mound of stones, which I had remarked from the bank, I made a desperate effort to grasp at it. It was within an arm's length. I strained every nerve, every sinew and muscle, to reach it. Vain struggle, vain hope! The water lashed me madly along, as it tore onward in its headlong course. I saw the sea at no great distance; and crying out, "Oh, my mother!" I gave myself up for lost.

As far as I can recollect, I was, after that one cry of anguish, in a state of half unconsciousness, and did not suffer. Suddenly, I felt a shock that thrilled from the soles of my feet to the crown of my head. I opened my eyes. I was on the very uttermost verge, I may say, of a furious whirlpool. I tried to rise, but the rush of water, even there, beat me down again. Animated by new hope, I strove, again and again, to withdraw myself from the dangerous vicinity. I was repeatedly baffled; but as I felt, at each new failure, that there was solid ground beneath me, I struggled on, until I had worked myself fairly into shallow water. When I was at

last able to stand up, I saw that the bank I had been aiming at was within a few yards of me, and made my way thither with comparative ease. I flung myself out of the water, and breathing out, "I thank thee, O my God!" sank down exhausted.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

CONCLUSION OF THE VOYAGE AND OF THE TALE.

THE first thing I did when I recovered, was to feel for my hat. Luckily, the cravat with which I had tied it on had not given way, like those round my knees, and I still had, what was of most consequence to me, my purse and my passport. My shoes were gone, and a good half of my stockings along with them: my feet and hands were sadly cut and bleeding. I was curious to know how, when all had seemed so hopeless, I had escaped. With a little reflection, I understood what had at first seemed little short of a miracle. I saw that the river made a sharp elbow at the point where I had felt the shock of the ground, and that it was even to the fury and impetuosity of the current, as it whirled round this obstacle, that I owed my life. In fact, I had been flung out of its course, as a stone from under the foot of a horse in full career. I perceived, also, that in five minutes more I must have been carried into the sea.

But very soon the sight and sound of the rushing waters became insupportable to me, (a feeling that lasted many long years after,) and I fled from it with precipitation, as from an enemy whose murderous grasp I had still to fear.

My clothes, as may be supposed, were in a pitiable state; wet, torn, and muddy. There were some bushes and young trees near, on which I hung some of my garments to dry; but, alas! down came a heavy shower; and as my object did not seem likely to be attained, I resumed my wet dress, and stood for several minutes under the branches of some trees, which had been interlaced so as to form a kind of shelter from rain or sunshine. This circumstance comforted me, as an indication that I was not far from the habitations of men.

The shower being over, I walked on a short way; when I observed, at a little distance from me, a man with a gun in his hand, whom, from his attitude and dress, I concluded to be a sportsman. My first impulse would have been to go towards him, and ask his assistance; but my experience of the day before had made me distrustful, and I stood hesitating. The man, however, had also seen me, and coming hastily towards me, he said—

"Who are you? what are you doing here? and pray, where are your companions?"

"What companions?" said I, amazed at his roughness, "I have no companions. As for what I am doing, you may see yourself. I am shaking with cold and hunger."

The man did not answer me at once, but stood with his gun full cocked, peering round and into the bushes and brushwood, as if he expected to discover somebody or something hidden there.

"But how did you come here?" asked he, returning to me after his useless search.

"I crossed the Var."

"You could not do that alone."

"I certainly did," retorted I.

"And what was your motive for running such a risk?"

I now guessed that, instead of a sportsman, I had fallen in with one of the men of the coast-guard.

"I have fled from the other side," said I, "on account of political motives."

To all appearance, the coast-guard was far from satisfied with my answers, as he surveyed me with suspicious eyes. To tell the truth, there must have been a Robinson Crusoe look about me, that might justify some mistrust.

"Come along with me!" said he at last, in no courteous tone, beginning to walk away pretty briskly; and with my bruised and bleeding feet, of which he had either taken no notice, or for which he had no compassion, I followed him.

After about a quarter of an hour's walking over marshy ground, but which was covered with low bushes and verdure, we entered a high road, and I saw before me the little French village of Pont Saint Laurent, and also the bridge over the Var, which is the line of demarcation between France and Sardinia. It was with a strange mixture of pleasure and fear that I considered the short distance which separated me from the scaffold. After all, thought I, there is some good in conventionality. We went into a small wooden building, in which there were four or five custom-house officers, one of whom offered me some brandy out of a gourd, an offer I accepted with alacrity.

My guide spoke to one of them, who seemed the superior, and who, after hearing the account of my capture, replied in a loud voice,—

"This is no business of mine ; go to the quarter-master."

We then took our way to the barracks of the gens d'armes. As we went along we met several persons, principally day-labourers and soldiers; and I remarked with surprise and mortification that I was an object of curiosity to all, of sympathy to none. The quarter-master was standing at the door of the barracks. So soon as he saw us approaching he called out,—

"An early prize! of course another smuggler."

"The gentleman gives himself out to be a political refugee," replied my conductor. "Likely enough," replied the quarter-master, shrugging his shoulders. "I see how it is: more food for powder and Algiers."

Deserters who fled to France were at that epoch sent to Africa, and incorporated in the foreign legion. I did not at that moment understand what was meant, and therefore took no notice of the words.

The coast-guard man then went away, and the quarter-master became my escort. I at once classed him among that species of functionaries who think by arrogance and surliness to add importance to their office. We soon reached and entered a mean looking house of one story.

"You must now be pleased to give an account of yourself to the Mayor," said my new guide, addressing me in a most consequential tone.

The worshipful Mayor was occupied mending a bird-cage.

"What's the matter now?" said he, putting on an official frown as he saw me enter the room.

"A deserter!" unhesitatingly replied the quarter-master.

This time the words were plain enough. I could no longer doubt that they were applied to me.

"Mr. Mayor," cried I warmly, "I am no deserter; of which you may easily convince yourself, if you will take the trouble to look at my passport."

The quarter-master looked both surprised and disappointed at my having one. The Mayor read and examined the passport with much attention, raising his eyes from time to time, to compare my appearance with the description it contained.

"This passport is not according to rule," said he at last; "I do not see the signature of the French Consul at Nice."

The objection was ridiculous.

"If I had had time and leisure to go to Nice, and to have my passport signed there," I replied, "it is not likely that I should have crossed the Var at the risk of my life."

"Your passport says 'fresh-coloured,'" interrupted the quarter-master, who had been looking at it over the Mayor's shoulder, "and you are as yellow as a canary bird. You need not try to deceive us; as sure as I'm alive you are a deserter."

The description of the friend who had procured the passport at Genoa answered very well for me, excepting as to complexion. I would not give a direct answer to the quarter-master, but turning to the Mayor I said,—

"Have the goodness to consider that the danger I have just escaped is a tolerably good reason for my not being 'fresh coloured' at this moment, without taking into account my not having tasted food for twenty-four hours, and that I am dripping wet. It is no great wonder, I think, if I do look rather pale."

My arguments, and the tone in which I uttered them, seemed to make some impression on the Mayor; but he was evidently intimidated by the presence of the quarter-master.

"Write your name," said he gruffly, giving me a pen and piece of paper. I wrote my name, which he compared closely with the signature I had myself put to the passport on receiving it.

"Now," said the Mayor, "relate to me, and circumstantially, all the particulars which have caused you to leave your native country." I said that one of my brothers and several of my intimate friends having been thrown into prison on account of their political opinions, which had given umbrage to the Government, I had been advised to get out of the way for a short time.

The Mayor made note of all I said.

"It appears to me that, under these circumstances, I cannot refuse my signature;" said he at last with a sigh and a deprecatory look at the quarter-master. "If you are satisfied to do so," replied the latter, "in spite of the difference of complexion, why, of course, I have nothing to say to it."

"Let me see your hands," said the Mayor suddenly. I held them out; he examined them, inside and out; felt them, and

then made the quarter-master do the same. They were searching, I suppose, for the corns which the use of the musket always causes.

"Are your pockets well lined, my man?" asked the Mayor, with a knowing look at the quarter-master.

I stared at him without answering.

"Have you any money?" persisted he.

"Yes."

"Well, let me see."

I drew out my purse, which, notwithstanding the several attacks I had made on it, was still pretty full, and poured out the contents on the table before which the Mayor was seated.

The Mayor raised his hands, as if to say, "that's enough!" signed my passport at once; and added, "You may boast of your good luck as long as you live. A man who has escaped the gibbet in Piedmont, and who at this season could swim across the Var in safety, must have been born under a lucky star." He then made a low bow, which I duly returned, and gladly left his presence.

The sudden politeness of the Mayor, the friendly, almost playful tone of his last words, formed a pretty strong contrast to his gruff unceremonious manner during the first part of our interview; and I confess I could not help laughing in my sleeve, and inwardly humming Figaro's song, "*All' idea di quel Metallo!*"

During the scene which I have just sketched, and which passed in a room on the ground floor, with open windows

looking out on the street, a crowd of persons had gathered round. In the midst of this throng was a custom-house officer, whose physiognomy and gestures showed him to be in a state of great excitement. The few of his ejaculations which I could hear were highly expressive of his indignation at the treatment I had received, and of his sympathy for me.

As soon as I went out this man came up to me, shook me heartily by the hand, and bade me cheer up. We were friends at once. Fenouil (that was his name) was a warm-hearted, good-natured fellow, about fifty years of age; one of those happily organized creatures, with whom to be unfortunate and in need of help was the strongest recommendation. He proffered me his services with a look and accent which made me feel that the best acknowledgment of his kindness was to accept and make use of it.

"First of all," said I, "I want a pair of shoes."

"We will soon get them," answered Fenouil.

I expected of course that he would take me to a shop; but instead of that it was to his own poor little dwelling that we went; and do or say what I would I was compelled to accept a pair of his own shoes, and to put them on immediately. They were a pair of reddish thick-soled shoes, which certainly did not suit me very well, and yet I liked them better than the costliest and most irreproachable pair I have ever worn since. I should have been glad to buy a pair of stockings, and some other clothes, but dared not speak of such a thing, lest my new friend should insist on dressing me in one of his custom-house greatcoats.

Being thus provided with what was most indispensable, Fenouil took me to the best public-house in the village, and while the "*Omelette au lard*" was preparing, I wrote a few most guarded lines to Alfred—not to his address, however—to make known that I had at last accomplished my escape to France. It was lucky that Fenouil and myself were provided with excellent appetites, otherwise we could not have relished as we did the very frugal breakfast we partook of together.

As I found that the Diligence or stage-coach from Nice to Antibes would not pass for another hour, I thought it would be as well to go and dry myself and my still damp garments in the sun on the high road, as to remain chilled in the miserable room of a miserable tavern. As soon as I reached the road a group of persons assembled round me, full of curiosity to hear my adventures, and to get at the details of my passage of the Var. I found, however, that almost all my listeners were incredulous as to my having achieved that feat alone and unassisted. Some, indeed, did not hesitate openly to express that opinion. How could they bring themselves to believe that I who knew nothing about the river, should not only have ventured but accomplished that which the boldest among the smugglers would shrink from attempting at this season of the year!

Fenouil, surveying these unbelievers with undisguised contempt, asked them, if they took the gentleman for a milk-sop: and as I listened to their discussion, I felt a retrospective panic thrill through me at my narrow escape.

While we were thus engaged, who should come up smiling and hat in hand, but my persecutor the quarter-master; he said he had come to congratulate me on my safety, and to beg me to forgive him for the disagreeable part he had been constrained by his sense of duty to act; winding up his oration with a request that I would give him gold in exchange for two hundred francs in silver. I complied without hesitation; but I became really alarmed lest I should be deprived of all my gold, when there came similar applications from two others of the government officers.

Fenouil gave me an explanation of this somewhat strange eagerness after gold on the part of the government employés of Pont Saint Laurent, which I have utterly forgotten. Luckily the arrival of the Diligence cut short this new species of traffic.

Fenouil wrote in pencil, on a piece of paper, "Fenouil Pierre, préposé des Douanes de la Brigade de St. Laurent, Var." "If a poor custom-house officer can ever be of any use to you," he began, presenting me with the bit of paper,—but he could not add another word. I pressed his hand in mine, too much touched by his genuine kindness of heart to be able to speak. "Farewell, farewell!" and the Diligence rolled away.

God bless thee, poor custom-house officer; for thy heart would have done honour to a Marshal of France. Thy autograph is more precious to me than were that of the greatest of European celebrities, and I shall keep it religiously to the last day of my life.

At Antibes I was able to get myself some stockings and a blouse, thanks to the good landlady of the Hôtel de la Poste, who acted the part of a mother to me. What she thought or suspected she kept to herself; and she bathed my torn and bleeding feet, like a true woman, full of ready sympathy and tenderness for suffering, let it come in what shape it would!

My dress, however, must have had something grotesque and droll in its arrangements; for the next day, when I got down from the coach at Marseilles, my appearance excited a good deal of mirth among the bystanders, one of whom pointing to me, said, "What a smart fellow! I wager anything he is come to be married.—Parions qu'il va se marier."

The reception I met with at the Hôtel du Midi, where I went for rooms, confirmed me in this belief, and made me sensible of the necessity of providing myself immediately with a less remarkable costume. So I sent forthwith for a hatter and a bootmaker, and also to a warehouse for ready-made clothes. An hour later I was once more dressed as a gentleman. As it happened, the suit that fitted me best was a black one: I looked as if I were in mourning.

I made haste to Fantasio, who received me as a friend would a dear, dear friend he had despaired of ever seeing again on this side of the grave. Previous to leaving Genoa I had contrived to inform him of my possible arrival at Marseilles within a few days; but as more than a week had elapsed without his seeing me, or receiving any tidings, he had concluded that my attempt at flight had been foiled;

and that I had fallen into the hands of the police. Great therefore was his joy to behold me safe and well; and great was mine to find myself once more by the side of an affectionate friend.

But my joy was soon damped at the sight of the dreadful change that had come over Fantasio's appearance. He looked so pale, so careworn, so haggard,—the shadow of himself.

"What is the matter with you?" said I; "you look very ill."

"Oh! nothing at all," stammered out Fantasio; "I have been very uneasy about you, and ——." He stopped. I hesitated also to speak.

At last I said, "Any bad news from home?" Fantasio attempted to reply, but could not, and turned away.

"For Heaven's sake," I cried, "do not try to deceive me;—tell me what has happened. What—of—Cæsar?"

Fantasio hid his face and sobbed aloud.

I understood it all. Merciful God! Cæsar was no more!

Note by the Editor.

Lorenzo's presentiment as to his brother's fate had proved but too true. Nor was Cæsar the only one among the reader's acquaintances—the single victim. Poor Sforza had been shot; the two associates of Vittorio, Miglio was one of them, were also shot. Vadoni was condemned to imprison-

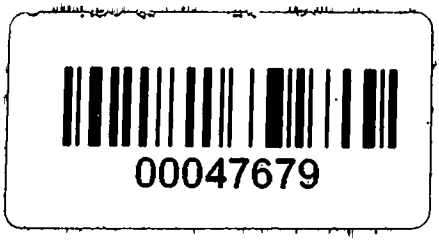
ment for life. Lazzarino to ten years' solitary confinement in a fortress.

The mystery that enveloped Vittorio's fate was not cleared till some months afterwards, when it was ascertained that he was at Bologna, a prisoner. To explain:—On the morning of the day previous to the capture of the chief conspirators, Vittorio was summoned before his Colonel, seized on while off his guard, thrown into a post-chaise, and conveyed under escort to the frontier of the Roman States, of which he was a native. By this summary, and apparently rigorous proceeding, had the gallant officer contrived, without committing himself too far, to save at least the life of his young subordinate, for whom he was known to entertain a special regard.

Count Alberto and Alfred were left unmolested. Adriano Stella, who was absent from home at the time when the arrests began, took good care to keep out of the way.

Many a fine fellow, chiefly among the military, whose name has not appeared in the foregoing pages—Vochieri was one—was shot at Alexandria and Chambery; some were confined for life, or for periods varying from ten to twenty years; a still greater number succeeded in effecting their escape abroad.

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